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THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF BENGAL TO THE
RISE OF THE PALA DYNASTY
(c. 326 B.C. to A.D. 750).

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ABSTRACT

We have divided our work into eight chapters with an introduction, a conclusion, and four appendices.

The introduction contains a brief account of the physical features of Bengal and the ancient regions and important cities.

In the first chapter it is shown that the people of some parts of Bengal were highly civilised before the Āryans entered the country. This chapter also deals with the gradual process of Āryanisation in Bengal.

The second chapter deals with the Gangaridai and Prasii of classical sources. In this chapter we have critically discussed the Mahāsthān inscription of the Mauryan period.

In the third chapter we have tried to reconstruct the history of Bengal from the fall of the Mauryas to the rise of the Guptas. Because of lack of original sources we are unable to throw much light on this period.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the history of Bengal under the Guptas. In this chapter we have discussed the identification of Candragupta of the Meherauli Pillar Inscription and have identified him with Candragupta II. This chapter

deals with the reigns of the Gupta Emperors down to Viṣṇu Gupta, with special reference to Bengal during the period.

The fifth chapter discusses the political life of Bengal after the break-up of the Gupta empire and the rise of Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva in south-east Bengal. We refute in this chapter the theory that these kings began to rule immediately after the reign of Vainya Gupta (A.D. 507), as some scholars believe. We have suggested that they rose to power only after the downfall of the imperial Guptas in or after A.D. 543-44.

The sixth chapter deals with the rise of Gauda under Śaśāṅka; this chapter discusses his relations with Malwa and Sthānvīsvara.

The seventh chapter shows the political life of Bengal after the death of Śaśāṅka, whose death was followed by a period of chaos and confusion. It shows that Harṣavardhana gained control of much of Bengal after Śaśāṅka's death, and that after the death of Harṣa there was a series of foreign invasions, but eastern Bengal at least remained independent for some time under the Khadga dynasty. This period of anarchy and confusion came to an end after the election of Gopāla.

The eighth and last chapter deals with the administrative system of Bengal from the Mauryas to Śaśāṅka.

In the conclusion we have given a rapid survey of our work and have attempted to show a general picture of the period.

The work contains four appendices. In Appendix A. we have tried to interpret the administrative terms referred to in Bengal copper-plates. Appendix B. is a study of the coins of the period which have been found in Bengal. Appendix C. deals with the original homeland of the Imperial Guptas and we have refuted the suggestion that this was in Bengal. Appendix D. is a list of inscriptions of the period. We conclude with a bibliography, which includes those books, inscriptions and articles which we have consulted in writing this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

The task of writing a history of Bengal from the earliest times to the rise of the Pālas is by no means an easy one.

Though many aspects of the history of Early Bengal have been studied very thoroughly in R.C. Majumdar's History of Bengal Volume I comparatively little work has been done on her early political life. He emphasised social and religious history rather than political.

Scholars like R.G. Basak¹, B.C. Sen² and N.R. Ray³ have added considerably to our knowledge of the political condition of our period of Bengal history in works of wider scope. On the other hand the one work which explicitly claims to treat of our period in great detail, F.J. Monahan's Early History of Bengal, is satisfactory only as regards the first chapter dealing with the Gangarides and Prasii, but the rest of his book deals with Kauṭilya's Artha-Sāstra rather than the History of Bengal.

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1. History of North-Eastern India (c. A.D. 320-760), London, 1934.
 2. Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal, Calcutta, 1942.
 3. Bāṅgālīr Itihāsa, Calcutta, 1952.

This thesis is a study of the political history of Bengal as far as it can be reconstructed from the available sources, such as literature, Indian and foreign, travel-accounts, geographical texts, coins etc., besides a large number of epigraphical sources of our period. These are chiefly copper-plate grants which throw considerable light on the political life of the day, especially on that of local government. So the inscriptions have received our primary attention as a source^{for} our study.

Before we study the history of Bengal it is essential to know her geographical background, because the facts of a country's history are closely linked with its geography. Without geography history remains incomplete.

Physical Aspects:-

Bengal has no deserts, no large lakes and no hills except on the fringe in the extreme north, east and west. The most characteristic physical feature of Bengal is her river-system. Bengal has two mighty rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, which have carried a vast deposit of silt from^{the} uplands and have created the enormous area of deltaic lowlands; and the process is still going on. These rivers are the gift of nature, they have given rise to many flourishing

cities and thriving marts. But sometimes they change their faces and create great havoc, and bring the untold miseries to the people.

Important regions and cities of Bengal during the Period

It is very difficult task to describe the boundaries of geographical divisions and localities of ancient Bengal. The natural boundaries were generally the rivers whose beds have been constantly shifting. It is also important to remember that the boundaries of the various regions and cities in Bengal have fluctuated owing to political and administrative exigencies.

Nature has divided the province into three broad divisions. North of the main branch of the Ganges, now known as the Padmā, and the west of Brahmaputra, is the region which comprises the Rajshahi Division.¹ The most important part of this area constituted the ancient land of Pundravardhana. West of another branch of Ganges, the Bhāgīrathī or the Hughli, stretches the Burdwan Division - the Vardhamāna bhukti in ancient times. A considerable part of this area constituted the ancient territory of Rādha.

1. Our work is dealing with the undivided Bengal.

Between the Bhāgīrathī, the Padmā, the lower part of the Brahmaputra and the estuary of the Meghnā lies the central region of Bengal. This area was known to Pliny and Ptolemy as the territory of the Gangaridai. It constituted the ancient land of Vaṅga and a considerable part of Samatata. Puṇḍravardhana.

Puṇḍravardhana, as the name suggests, was a settlement of the Puṇḍras.¹ The earliest epigraphical reference to Puṇḍravardhana is the Mahāsthān inscription², where ^{chief city is} its ~~was~~ a seat of government. It was a large territorial division in the possession of the Guptas. It is mentioned in the inscriptions of Kumāra Gupta I, Budha Gupta and Viṣṇu (?) Gupta which are found in North Bengal.

The geographical limits of Puṇḍravardhana in the seventh century can be ascertained with a fair degree of certainty from the itinerary of Hsüan Tsang. He came to this country from Kañgaḷa,³ near Rājmaḥāl, and it lay on the other side of the Ganges. On the east, the country of Puṇḍravardhana was bounded by a river which the Chinese pilgrim had to cross before he was able to arrive in Kāmarūpa (the Gauhati region

1. See p. 37-38

2. See p. 76

3. Watters, II, p. 184.

of Assam). "From Pun-na-fa-tan-na the pilgrim travelled east ... crossed a large river and came to Ka-mo-lu-po".¹ This river is probably to be identified with the Karatoyā,² a branch of the Brahmaputra river. It is stated in the Yoginī Tantra that the river Karatoyā was the western boundary of Kāmarūpa.³ Thus Puṇḍravardhana was bounded by the main stream of the Ganges on the west and the river Karatoyā on the east. As Samatata, corresponding to Lower and Eastern Bengal, lay to the South-East of Puṇḍravardhana, this area included Malda, Dinajpur, Rajshahi and portions of the Bogra and Rangpur districts, situated to west of the Karatoyā. In the Vāyu Purāṇa⁴ there is a reference to a city of the name of Koṭivarṣa (Koṭivarṣam ... nagaram). As we know from the Gupta inscriptions, Kotivarṣa (Koṭivarṣaviṣaya) was a sub-division of Puṇḍravardhana.

Near the site of the present village of Mahāsthān was the most important city of Puṇḍravardhana, generally known as Puṇḍranagara.

Gauḍa - In the Gupta times Gauḍa was also under the

1. Watters, II, p. 185.

2. H.A.B.I., p. 105.

3. Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Parisat Patrikā (Rangpur Sākhā), Vol. III, Pt. ii, p. 58, Calcutta.

4. Vāyu Purāṇa, Vol. I, Chap. XXIII, V. 196.

jurisdiction of Pundravardhana. For several centuries its capital was one of the most important cities of Bengal but to-day it is represented by a thinly populated area in the district of Malda mostly covered with jungles and unhealthy swamps.¹

Gauḍa is well known to the Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra.² The country is also familiar to Vāts^yayana, the author of the Kāma Sūtra.³ We learn from the Haraha Inscription⁴ of A.D. 554 that Īṣāṇavarman Maukhari compelled the people of Gauḍa to seek refuge near the sea-coast. It appears from the inscription that the ^{Southern boundary of the} country was not very far from the sea-shore.

Suhma - According to the ancient tradition, embodied in the Purāṇas, the Suhmas were originally allied to the four other tribes, the Āṅgas, Vaṅgas, Kalingas and Pundras.⁵ The Suhmas are unknown to the Vedic literature. The Great Epic mentions their name. It is said that Mahāvīra visited the Suhma country.⁶ Their country was also known to Patañjali.⁷ The Suhmas also appear in the Buddhist Samyutta Nikāya.⁸

1. On Gaur, See C.A.S.R., Vol. XV, pp. 41 ff.

2. Book. II. 13.

3. Kāmasūtra, (Benares ed.), pp. 115, 294.

4. E.I., XIV. 117.

5. Vi. P., Vol. IV. Chap. 18, p. 122.

6. Kālpasūtra, S.B.E., Book 1, 8, 3.

7. Mahābhāṣya (IV. 2, 52) Kielhorn, II. 282.

8. V. 89; Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names, II, 1252.

The Daśakumāra-Carita¹ (6th century A.D.) includes Dāmalīpta (Tāmralīpta or Tamluk) in the Suhma territory, but the Great Epic distinguishes the Suhmas from the people of Tamluk. The Pavanadūta² of Dhoyī (twelfth century A.D.) places the Suhma country on the Ganges. According to some scholars³ the Triveni-Saptagrāma-Pandua area in the Hughli district is the Suhma country. Nilakanṭha⁴ equates Suhma with Rāḍha. It appears that Suhma ^{lay}is lying to the west of the Bhāgīrathi river.

Rāḍha - The Jaina Acāraṅga-Sūtra⁵ describes the land of the Lāḍhas (Rāḍhā) in West Bengal as a pathless country inhabited by a rude people who attacked Mahāvīra. In one of the Upāṅgas⁶, Prajñāpana, the Lāḍhas and the Vaṅgas are classed as Āryans. The latter are represented as possessing the city of Tāmalitti (Tamluk). The Lāḍhas had Koṭīvarisa (Koṭīvarṣa),^{which} has been identified with modern Bāngarh in the Dinajpur district. We find in the Gupta period that Koṭīvarṣa was included in the Puṇḍravardhana province and not in Rāḍhā.

1. Ucchvāsa VI. p. 244.

2. V.V. 27 ff.

3. Cf. R.D. Banerji, J.A.S.B., 1909, 245 ff; G.M. Sarkar, J.L. XVI. 23, 57, 78; C. Chakravarti, Pavanadūtām of Dhoyī, Introduction, p. 25.

4. Commentary on Mbh. II. 30, 16.

5. 1, 8, 3; Jacobi in S.B.E., XXII. 84, 264.

6. I.A., 1891, p. 375.

The Ācāraṅga-Sūtra¹ divides the land of Lāḍha into two parts named Vajjabhūmi and Subbha- (= Suhma-) bhūmi. Vajja-bhūmi or Vajrabhūmi had its capital, according to commentators, at Paṇitabhūmi. The portion lying to the west of the Bhāgīrathī, which is a continuation of the Chota Nāgpur plateau, is generally called Rāḍhā. In the later period, the territory was divided into two parts viz., Dakṣiṇa or South Rāḍhā and Uttara or North Rāḍhā.

Vaṅga - The earliest reference to Vaṅga is to be found in the Aitareya Aranyaka.² The Anguttara Nikāya³ mentions Vaṅga only once. Patañjali, the author of the Mahābhāṣya, illustrates a Sūtra of Pāṇini by making a reference to the Vaṅgas and their country.⁴ The Arthaśāstra⁵ of Kauṭilya mentions the white and soft fabric manufactured in Vaṅga and declares that cotton fabrics of Mathurā, Kalinga, Kāśī and Vaṅga are of the best quality. The Purāṇas⁶ speak of the Vaṅgas as allied to the Aṅgas, Suhmas, Puṇḍras and Kalingas. According to the Jaina, Prajñāpana,⁷ Tāmralipta once belonged

1. 1.8.3. S.B.E., XXII. 84, 264.

2. Keith, A.A. 11. 1, pp. 101, 200.

3. Pt. 1, p. 213 - P.T.S. (Vaṅgānam).

4. Kielhorn, 11, p. 282.

5. Arthaśāstra, II, XI.

6. M.K.P., p. 325 n., Vi.P., Vol. IV, Chap. 18, p.122.

7. I.A., 1891, pp. 373-75.

to the Vaṅgas. According to the story of Raghu's digvijaya,¹ as given in the Raghuvamśa, the hero came to the Vaṅga country after having conquered the kingdom of the Suhmas. Vaṅga's position was thus on the eastern side of the Bhāgīrathī, the Suhmas living on the other side. Vaṅga is mentioned in the Meherauli inscription² of Candraraja and in one of the earliest records of the Cālukyas of Vātāpi.³ It is to be located in the South-east of Bengal.

Samatata - the geography of Vaṅga was closely connected with that of Samatata, which is mentioned for the first time in the Allāhābād Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta as a border kingdom.⁴ Its exact limits in the Gupta period are not known. The Brhat-Saṃhitā⁵, a work of the sixth century A.D., distinguishes it from Vaṅga. Hsüan Tsang describes it as a low and moist country on the sea-side to the south of Kāmarūpa (in Assam).⁶

Tāmrālipta - This was an important city of ancient Bengal. There is no reference to it in the Vedic literature. It is first mentioned in the Great Epic. In the third

1. IV. 36.

2. C.I.I., III 141.

3. I.A., XIX. 7 ff.

4. C.I.I., III, p. 8, 14.

5. XIV. 6-8.

6. Watters II p.187.

century B.C. it is said that King Devānāpiya Tissa of Ceylon sent four envoys to the Maurya emperor Aśoka; these are said to have reached the haven of Tāmalittī from Jambukola (in Northern Ceylon) in seven days.¹ It is mentioned in the geography of Ptolemy (about the middle of the second century A.D.). According to the Prajñāpana,² which we have already quoted on several occasions, Tāmraliptā once belonged to the Vāṅgas. But in the sixth century A.D., the city of Tāmralipta was regarded as situated in the territory of the Suhmas. Now it is represented by Tamluk in the Midnapur district, about twelve miles from the junction of the Rupnarayan with the Hughli. Hsüan Tsang describes the city as on an "inlet of the sea; the land was low and moist, farming was good, fruit and flowers abounded, the climate was hot, the customs of the people were rude, the inhabitants were courageous, and they were believers in Buddhism and other systems."³ Tāmralipti was the place of disembarkation for travellers to India from China by sea. In this city I-Tsing and other pilgrims landed, and from here voyagers started on their return to the south and to China.⁴

1. Mahāvamsa., (Trans.), 1912, pp. 78-80, 128-29.

2. I.A., 1891, pp. 373-75.

3. Watters, II, p. 189-90.

4. Takakusu pp. 185, 211; Chavannes, "Mem", p. 71.

Karnasuvarṇa - was the capital of Śaśāṅka, the king of Gauda. Hsüan Tsang came to this city from Tāmralipti.¹ The Chinese pilgrim says that "the country was well inhabited and the people were very rich. The land was low and moist, ... flowers and fruits were abundant; the climate was temperate, and the people were of good character and were patrons of learning."² He says also that there were fifty Deva Temples and more than ten Buddhist monasteries and "the followers of the various religions were very numerous."³ It appears from the pilgrim's account that the city was quite prosperous. It can be taken as fairly certain that in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. a considerable area, including at least portions of Murshidabad, was called Karnasuvarṇa.⁴ It was from this place that the Vappaghoṣavāṭa grant of Jayanāga and the Nidhānpur plates of Bhāskaravarman were issued in the seventh century.

1. Watters, II, p. 191.

2. Ibid.

3. Watters, II, p. 191.

4. District Gazetteer (Mushidabad) Vol. XXXII, p. 2.

CHAPTER I

Pre-historic Civilisation in Bengal.

Until the excavations at Pandu Rajar Dhibi we had very limited archaeological evidence of the pre-historic civilisation of Bengal. The ancient mound of the Ajay Valley in Burdwan district has brought to light for the first time the evidence of a proto-historic civilisation which seems to belong to the second millennium B.C.¹ The fragments of beautiful channel-spouted bowls of black, black and red, and lustrous red ware, perforated pottery, micro-liths, neolithic celts, beads of semi-precious stones and a few bits of copper have been found. These antiquities throw some light on the proto-history of Bengal. And they have also proved that there is a close affinity between some of these findings and those from Central India and Rajasthan.

It has been suggested by the archaeological

1. P.C.Das Gupta, Excavations at Pandu Rajar Dhibi (1964), pp. 11ff.

evidence that the first inhabitants were a simple agricultural people who lived in mud houses and had an industry of thick hand-made pale red pottery, bearing impressions of paddy-husks; the later phases of their culture showed traits of an urban civilisation whose general equipment included painted black and red and lustrous red wares, channel-spouted bowls, and perforated pottery. The impressions of husks in the pottery-fragments of Period I were scientifically analysed and they were identified as those of cultivated paddy. If this is the case, it appears that the antiquity of the cultivation of rice in Bengal goes back to the second millennium B.C.

The black and red wares of Pandu Rajar Dhibi are painted with oblique strokes, dots, hyphens, ladders, wavy lines etc. The black and red ware is mainly represented by knife edged or lipped bowls and high-necked jars; the painted red ware includes shallow bowls and basins with extended rims besides footed cups and bowls on stands. Although a few tools of iron, including a long celt and an arrow-head with a hollow tang, were discovered from the level of Period III, the metal

was totally absent in Periods I and II, when copper was known. A radio-carbon analysis places Period II in 1012 ± 120 B.C. If this is correct we must assume that iron was known in this site quite early in the 1st millennium B.C. In this connection we should point out that a few tools of wrought iron had been used both in Egypt and Mesopotamia even in the third millennium B.C.¹ The Hittites also knew the use of iron. The earliest reference to it is to be found in the inscription dated 13th century B.C. of the Hittite king Anittas, who records that he received an iron sceptre and an iron throne as tribute from the city of Puruskhanda.² But the question is here: When was iron first used in India? D.H.Gordon stated,³ "Once one gets down to (Indian) deposits that must date earlier than 400 B.C. there is no iron and, furthermore, it would appear likely that at most sites the culture which continues to that date was one that utilized copper and stone". "There was no iron

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1. Gordon Childe, What Happened in History, 1950, p.182. and R.J.Forbes, Metallurgy in Antiquity, pp. 416ff.
 2. O.R.Gurney, The Hittites, 1952, p.83.
 3. The Pre-historic Background in Indian Culture, (Bombay, 1958), p.155 and 154.

with the invaders of India between 1800-1400 B.C. The Hittites kept the secret of the process (of smelting and forging iron) which would make iron a serious competitor with bronze.....Not till 1200 B.C. (do we) get iron-working starting to spread all over western Asia, the Caucasus and eastern and Central Europe. By 1100 B.C. iron was superseding bronze on the Iranian plateau and appears in graves in Luristan and at Necropole B at Sialk....By 800 B.C. there was a full iron age throughout eastern Europe and Western Asia. Copper and bronze were no longer economic propositions and gave way to iron, articles of which were produced far more cheaply and in considerable quantity, making the possession of metal tools possible for those who had to content themselves with stone."¹

Sir Mortimer Wheeler² says that Indians learned the use and preparation of iron only from the Achaemenid conquest. He even states "There is at present no clear

1. D.H.Gordon, op.cit., pp.155 and 154.

2. Charsadda/A metropolis of the North west Frontier. Oxford 1962. pp. 33-4. The same position was taken earlier in Wheeler's Early India & Pakistan to Aśoka, (London, 1959), where he puts the Gangetic copper hoards 'at a guess' before the 8th century B.C., but fails to see iron before the Achaemenids.

evidence for the systematic use of iron anywhere in the (Indian) subcontinent before (the 7th century B.C.) unless sporadically in the northwestern region. Attempts to equip the Vedic Aryans, in the middle of the second millennium B.C., or their successors of the Brāhmaṇa period, with iron have no solid substance...The earliest unequivocal literary evidence~~s~~ for the use of iron by Indians ~~are~~ the well-known references by Herodotos and Ktesias (5th century B.C.) and the earliest firm archaeological evidence for the normal use of iron within the sub-continent is provided by the First Taxila (Bhīr Mound) for which Marshall's initial date of c.500 B.C. is unlikely to be varied significantly. It is reasonable in the present state of knowledge to associate this developed use of iron with the imposition of Achaemenid suzerainty first upon Gandhāra and then upon the Indus region by Cyrus (558-530 B.C.) and/or Darius (521-485 B.C.) with the consequent quickening of trade and civic life in the north-west".

Ktesias saw two wonderful swords of Indian steel at the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon.¹ Herodotus speaks

1. D.H.Gordon, The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture, p.162.

of the arrows of Indian soldiers tipped with iron¹ while Curtius refers to a hundred talents of Indian steel presented to Alexander.²

Despite the views of these authorities recent archaeological discoveries would place the date of the first used iron in India in the early 1st millennium B.C. Small fragments and shapeless bits of iron occur at Kausāmbi even before the painted grey and northern black polished wares in the Central Ganga Valley.³ These objects increase a great deal in number with the beginning of the Cultural Period III, characterised by the N.B.P.ware.⁴ At Hastināpura, iron slag and ore were found in the upper most layers of Period II in association with the painted grey ware.⁵ This Painted Grey Ware occupation began at the site early in the 11th century B.C., and ended because of floods in the beginning of the 8th century B.C.⁶ At

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1. W.H.Schoff, 'The Eastern Iron Trade of the Roman Empire', JAOS., 35, p.231.
 2. Curtius, IX., 24.
 3. G.R.Sharma, 'The Excavations at Kausambi' (1957-59), Allahabad, 1960, p.45.
 4. Ibid.
 5. B.B.Lal, 'Ancient India', Nos. 10 and 11, p. 13; Proto-historic Investigation, 'Ancient India', No. 9, p.95.
 6. Ibid., p.96; AI., Nos.10 and 11, p.23.

the excavations at Alamgirpur similarly confirmed the association of iron with the Painted Grey Ware; iron objects together with those of copper were found throughout the Period II.¹ The ancient city of Śrāvastī also yielded iron in association with the Painted Grey Ware.² The Painted Grey Ware cannot be associated with the Bronze Age alone; it has been attributed to the Vedic Aryans, spread over the Punjab, U.P., and the Sarasvati Valley.³

The earliest levels of Period III at Rupār, beginning circa 600 B.C. produced implements of copper and iron.⁴

Excavations at Purāṇa Qilā, Delhi, revealed that copper had been supplemented by iron by the 6th century B.C.⁵ Excavations at the Garh Kalika mound on the outskirts of Ujjain disclosed that iron was known to its ancient dwellers from the earliest period. Iron weapons, such as spears, arrow-heads and knives, have been discovered from the strata of Period I, assigned to c.700-500 B.C.⁶

1. ASI.A.R., (1958-59), p.54.

2. Ibid.

3. AI., 10 & 11, p.1-3, and 138ff.

4. Y.D.Sharma, Exploration of Historical Sites, AI., No.9, p.123.

5. ASI.A.R., 1954-55, p.14.

6. ASI.A.R., 1957-58, p.49.

Besides this archaeological evidence we have also evidence from literary sources. The Rgveda refers to a metal called ayas but it is not iron, and we must take it as copper¹ ^{or bronze}. The Atharvaveda¹ mentions śyāma ayas or black metal. It seems to us iron. Another passage of the AtharvaVeda states: "Cut along this skin with dark (metal), O slaughter joint by joint with the knife (asi)".² Ayas is thus divided into two classes, śyāma and lohita (red) in the later Samhitās and other Vedic texts.³ It appears that śyāma is iron and lohita is copper. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa draws a distinction between ayas and lohāyasa,⁴ or between iron and copper, according to Eggeling.⁵

Therefore, from the archaeological discoveries and the literary evidence the date for the introduction of iron in India can be placed between 1000 B.C. to 700 B.C. In this respect we must ask how the inhabitants of

1. AV., XI, 3, 1.7.

2. Ibid., IX.5.4.

3. AV., XI.3, 1.7; MS. IV.2.9.

4. SB., V, 4.1.2.

5. SBE., 41, p.90.

Pandu Rajar Dhibi came to know the use of iron. Did they come to know it from the Hittites and the Philistines of Western Asia at a time when the rest of India generally used only bronze? This cannot be said definitely without undertaking extensive explorations in the Ajay Valley.

The excavation in the year 1963 disclosed four periods, the last one having two phases. The first period began at a very early date when the people of this area lived on the surface of mottled sandy silt. Among the fine pottery wares discovered from this period were small fragments of black and red ware, plain sherds of thin section, and pieces of thick hand-made pottery. Among the scanty remains of this layer a fragment of charcoal, a few microliths and a kind of chocolate ware with whitish painting are also found from this period.

The second period of Pandu Rajar Dhibi seems to represent a flourishing stage of civilisation. In this period, the housing system is more advanced. This period produced numerous examples of painted pottery channel spouted bowls, microliths and copper ornaments. The period also showed a microlithic industry.

The culture of Period II is chalcolithic, recalling various sequences of this culture in other parts of India from the Indus Valley to the Deccan across Rajasthan, Malwa, Maharashtra and Surashtra.¹ The people of Periods I and II of Pandu Rajar Dhibi used to practice burials with east and west orientation (i.e., the head was turned to the east), and they used microliths and copper ornaments, including spiral bangles of seemingly West Asiatic affinity besides painted and perforated wares. The copper objects from the chalcolithic levels mainly consisted of spiral bangles and rings as also eye-pencils and fish-hooks which are of delicate workmanship.

The material culture of Pandu Rajar Dhibi remained almost the same in Period III, but this period produced polished neolithic celts with painted butts and also a few war implements of iron in the form of points and blades. Besides these, various beautiful examples of painted pottery and a vase-stand are found. This cultural phase, which may be known as chalcolithic-neolithic, in the language of V.D.Krishnaswamy² is well represented by

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1. See Sir Mortimer Wheeler, The Indus Age; H.D.Sankalia, Indian Archaeology Today. E.Mackay, Early Indus Civilizations (2nd ed.) London 1948; S.Piggott, Prehistoric India; N.G.Majumdar, Explorations in Sind, MAI, no.48, 1934.
 2. AI., No.16, 1960.

microliths,¹ copper objects comprising bangles, rings, eye-pencils and a fish-hook besides neolithic celts,² painted black and red ware, and red ware.³

The excavations of Periods II and III prove that there was an industry of bone tools. It has been suggested by P.C.Dasgupta, ^{the}archaeologist responsible for the excavations, that these bone tools bear mysterious affinity with a class of the fourth millennium B.C. pre-Dynastic bone tools of Afyeth in Nubia in Egypt as made by Group A people. The bone tools of Pandu Rajar Dhibi mainly consist of points and awls. One of the awls with a hollow base has been found from the Period II. Most probably these bone tools (~~Plate xv~~) were used for needle work. These were found along with stone implements, copper objects and painted pottery. The walls of the houses were made of reed-screens plastered with mud.

There is a trace of an extensive layer of ashes bearing witness to a serious conflagration that might have destroyed the pre-historic civilisation of Pandu Rajar Dhibi. How did this happen? Who destroyed it?

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1. Das Gupta, Pandu Rajar Dhibi, pl.xliv.
 2. Ibid., pl.xlvii.
 3. Ibid., pls.xxviii,xxxv.

Was the fire due to natural causes? Is it possible, that the conflagration of Period III was the result of an invasion preceded by trade in implements of iron? Above the layer of ashes iron occurs frequently along with new types of pottery belonging to early historic and later times, when the houses were made of burnt bricks. On the basis of such a revolutionary change between the material cultures of Periods III and IV it has been suggested by Mr.B.B.Lal,¹ that there was a break of culture and desertion of the site after the conflagration. But we cannot be sure of this because the earlier antiquities which are sometimes found in a post-conflagration level may be attributed to the occasional bringing of material from older levels by later inhabitants as a result of well and pit digging. In one of such pits of Period IV was found a round stone seal bearing in relief strange symbols and pictographs². The round seal of black steatite is one of the most important findings in the year 1963. The seal bears a row of engraved "symbols like hieroglyphs in a compartment on the margin while three pictographs representing a wavy line, a fish (shark) and a globular

1. Das Gupta, Pandu Rajar Dhibi, p.27.

2. Ibid., plate XVII.

object in relief occur below successively." This seal has been discovered from an ash-pit penetrating the strata of Periods II and III. Much attention was paid to its proper identification. Recently a British archaeologist, Mr. Michael Ridley, attempted its interpretation and he has come to the conclusion that it is of Minoan origin. He has also arrived at the conclusion that the hieroglyphs represent characters of Minoan Linear A script, and that the pictographs are comparable with those of the Phaestos Disc, both expressing the same proper name Actea. In his published monograph The Seal of Actea and the Minoan Scripts he also claims to have deciphered for the first time the Cretan Linear A Script through the seal from Pandu Rajar Dhibi which reveals, as he believes, Cretan hieroglyphs and pictographs together, though he is aware of the resemblance between the pictographs and the Rongo Rongo scripts of the Easter Island of the distant Pacific. According to Michael Ridley, "The decipherment of the seal of Actea has in itself already resulted in the falling into place of a great deal of evidence which points to the possibility that the inhabitants of Crete found their way to India 3500 years ago and traded with the people of Bengal".¹ The reading and

1. The Seal of Actea and the Minoan Scripts, intro.

interpretation by Michael Ridley is further supported by a number of graffiti appearing on pottery of black and red ware from Pandu Rajar Dhibi and analogous chalcolithic sites in the Ajay Valley from Ganga Danga near the confluence of the Ajay and the Bhāgirathi at Katwa.

It appears from the afore-mentioned materials of different periods of Pandu Rajar Dhibi that the people of pre-historic Bengal were highly civilised. Before the excavations at Pandu Rājār Dhibi scholars generally thought that the people of Bengal were uncivilised and barbarous, until at least the time of the Buddha.

While Mr. Ridley's interpretation of the seal is very dubious and will find little support among specialists, the resemblance of the seal to those of Knossos is quite impressive and this strongly suggests at least that there was trade between the inhabitants of Crete and the people of Pandu Rajar Dhibi. Moreover we have seen that there is a similarity between the red and black wares of Pandu Rajar Dhibi and the wares of Crete.¹

1. See A. Evans, The Palace of Minos at Knossos (5 vols.) London, 1921-28.

The great difficulty in all hypothesis of this kind at the moment, however, is that no similar material has been found in other parts of India and the theory of Cretan connexions with Bengal will only be confirmed if similar finds are made elsewhere, especially in the coastal areas of South India. The question may be asked how this civilisation arose and declined. It cannot be answered, and much more research is required. In this connexion we can only say that the civilisation of Pandu Rajar Dhibi is non-Āryan, and existed there long before Āryan culture entered Bengal.

Bengal in Ancient Indian Tradition

The story of the gradual Āryanisation of Eastern India is preserved in some detail in the Vedic literature which constitutes the only source of information relating to the earliest history of Bengal. The R̥gvedic Āryans knew only two rivers in the east, the Ganges¹ and the Yamuna² which lay beyond the Punjab and the North. The easternmost limit of their geographical horizon seems to have been the

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1. Rv. X,75,53; Rv.V.52, 187; VII,18-19; X,75,5.
 2. Rv. III, 53, 14.

land of the Kikatas mentioned in the Rg veda (~~Rg Vedaa~~). Yaska states that Kikatas was the name of a non-Āryan country. Zimmar and Weber identified Kikata with Magadha. But the identification is uncertain and is doubted by Oldenberg and Hillebrandt.¹ In later literature Kikata is often apparently a synonym of Magadha. The Vāyu^{1a} Purāṇa mentions Gaya and Rājagṛīha in Kikata. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa^{1b} also mentions Kikata, and Gayā-Pradeśa is in Kikata according to Śrīdhara.^{1c} In the Abhidhāna Cintāmani occurs the phrase Kikata Magadhānvayah.² It may be assumed with a fair degree of certainty that Kikata in later times represented at least a part of Magadha; but we cannot be certain that the original Kikata tribe was living there in the time of the Rg Veda. In fact the other geographical data of this text suggests that Magadha was then quite unknown. The earliest undoubted reference to Magadha (West Bihar) and Aṅga (Bhāgalpur) are found in the Atharva Veda,³ where fever (takma) is wished away to

1. Vedic Index, vol. I, p. 159.

2. Quoted in PHAI (4th ed), p. 95, note 5.

3. v. 22. 14.

1a. See chap. 108, v. 28.

1b. 1.3.24; 1.10.18

1c. See also Amūlya Vidyābūṣaṇa, Pravāsi, Bhādra, B.S. 1328, pp. 631-37.

certain people, the Mūjavants, the Āngas and the Magadhas. It is true that the Magadhas and the Āngas were treated as enemies by the Vedic Āryans at the time of the composition of this literature. The Vrātya Book in the Atharva Veda seems to be connected with the region and the people of Magadha. The connection of Magadha with the Vrātyas is apparent in the Atharva Veda, where the former is represented as his mitra, mantra, laughter and thunder.¹ The term Vrātya is a matter of controversy. The habits and customs of the Vrātyas differed from those of the Vedic Āryans. It has been maintained by some that they were originally Āryans² of a nomadic type later admitted to the cultured Vedic Society. The term Vrātya, in its later broad meaning, implied an Āryan who did not keep the faith and no longer respected the Vedas,^{but} the Vrātya of the Atharva Veda was a priest of non-Vedic fertility cult, which involved ritual dancing and flagellation. He roamed from place to place in a cart, with a woman and musician, who performed

1. Vedic Index, Vol. II, pp. 116, 342-44; AV., XV.2.1-4.

2. JASB.NS., XVII, 1921, pp. xxii; Keith, JRAS., 1913, pp. 159-160. Bloomfield, Atharva Veda, pp. 94, 95.n.

for him at his rites.¹ The position and nature of the Vrātyas are still not clear.

In the whole range of the Vedic literature including the Brāhmanas no work is found to contain any reference to Bengal with the single exception of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa² where the Pundras are mentioned for the first time.

Vaṅga is also referred to in a contemptuous manner in the Aitareya Aranyaka.³ There is an interesting story about the origin of the early people of Bengal in the Sunaḥśepa episode of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.⁴ The Viśvāmitra adopted as his son the Brāhmaṇa boy Sunaḥśepa who had been offered as a victim in a sacrifice to please a deity. expressed disapproval of the act and were cursed The fifty elder sons of the sage, by their father. "Your offspring" said the offended parent "shall inherit the ends of the earth". They came to be known as the Andhras, Pundras, Sabaras, Pulindas and Mutibas who lived in large number beyond the borders of Aryandom and ranked as dasyus. The echo of this legend is found also in the thirteenth

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1. Prof. A. L. Basham, The Wonder that was India, pp. 243-44.
 2. AB., VIII.22, p. 337. Keith.
 3. AA., p. 200, Keith.
 4. AB., VII, 13-18.

Book of the Mahābhārata. It is said that the Aṅgas, ^{descended from} Vaṅgas, Suhmas, Pundras and Kalingas were the five sons of Ṛṣi Dīrghatamas by Sudoṣṇā the sife of Bali. They were known as Bāleya Kṣatriyas as they were adopted by the king Bali as his own sons.

Some writers have traced the name of the Vaṅgas, another early Bengal tribe, to the Aitareya Aranyaka.¹ In the text occur the words Vayāmsi-Vaṅgāvagadhāś-Cera-pādāh. The expression Vaṅgā-vagadhāh could be emended to Vaṅga Magadha, i.e., the people of Vaṅga and Magadha, the Cera-pādāh appear to be the people of the Ceras or Keralas. It also mentions that these people were guilty of transgression.

The epithets "Vaṅgantaputta" and "Vaṅgīśa" are found in the Pāli Canon.² It seems to us that this phrase indicates the people of Vaṅga. "Vaṅgantaputta" can be explained as "the son of Vaṅga". Except this name, we know nothing about the early history of Bengal. The Suhmas are mentioned in the Saṃyutta Nikāya³ and in the Talapatta Jātaka.⁴ The early Buddhist writers who knew

1. AA., II, 1.1.p.101, 200.

2. Monaratha-Purani, I.270, Apadāna, II, 497, (v.29).

3. v.89. Malasekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper names, II, 1252.

4. Jāt.1. No. 96.

the Suhmas show little acquaintance with the Vaṅgas. But the earliest clear Buddhist literary reference to Vaṅga is actually contained in the Milinda-Pañho.¹ It mentions Vaṅga in a list of maritime countries where ships congregated for purposes of trade.

Pāṇini, who flourished long before the 2nd century B.C. knows Gaudāpura² but not Vaṅga. Vaṅga is well-known to his great commentator, Patāñjali.³

At the beginning of the sixth century B.C. there was no paramount power in North India, which was divided into a large number of independent states. According to Buddhist texts⁴ sixteen great countries flourished shortly before the time of ^aGautama Buddha. They are as follows according to the Anguttara Nikāya - Aṅga, Magadha, Kāśi, Kośala, Vajji (Skt. Vṛjī), Malla, Cedi, Vatsa (Vamśa), Kuru, Pañcāla, Matsya (Maccha), Surasena, Aśvaka or Asmaka, Avanti, Gandhāra and Kāmboja. These sixteen countries were known as 'Solaśamahājanapada'. The Jamavasabha Suttanta (Dīgha Nikāya, II) refers to some of them in

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1. Mala^{la}sekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper names, 11.802; SBE., XXXVI.11.269.
 2. VI.2.99-100.
 3. IV.1.4; IV.2.1. Kielhorn's ed. vol. II, 269-282.
 4. Anguttara, 1, 213; IV.252, 256, 260; Mahāvastu, 1, 34, 11, 3; Vinaya texts, 11, 146fn. Niddesa 11, 37.

pairs vis., Kāśī-Kośala, Vajji-Malla, Cedi-Vaṃsa, Kuru-Pañcāla and Matsya-Surasena. The Cullaniddesa adds Kalinga to the list. The Mahāvastu list agrees with that in the Anguttara Nikāya. But these early Buddhist texts did not include Vaṅga in the list of Sixteen Great Countries. During this period we do not know what was the political condition of Bengal.

As regards the Janapadas, the Jaina Bhagavatī Sūtra¹ also mentions the Sixteen Great Countries and includes the name of Vaṅga in the list, which is somewhat different from the Buddhist one:- Aṅga, Vaṅga, Magaha (Magadha), Malaya, Mālava, Acca, Vaccha (Vatsa), Koccha, Paḍha, Lāḍha (Rādhā), Bajji (Vajji), Moli, Kāśī, Kośala, Avāha and Sambhuttara.

Among the earliest Jaina literature, the Acārāṅga Sūtra² mentions two tribes of Bengal, the Suhmas and the Lāḍhas (Rādhā) in West Bengal. It describes also the land of the Lāḍhas as a "pathless country" inhabited by rude folk who attacked the peaceful monk, Mahāvīra". It seems to us that the country was covered with forests and jungles, damp and swampy. The Jain writers of the

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1. Saya XV, Uddessa I (Hoernle - The Uvāsagadasāo II, Appendix).
 2. 1.8.3. Jacobi in SBE., XXII.84.

Ācārāṅga Sūtra also state that "it is very difficult to travel in the land of ^{the} Lāḍhas."

From the above statement we may legitimately draw the inference that the primitive people of Bengal were different in race and culture from the Āryans. In the beginning, these people did not accept the Āryan culture easily. We have seen also that their name is not mentioned in the earliest Vedic Literature. It seems to show that they were unknown to or ignored by the Āryans during the early period of their settlement in the Punjab. The references in the Atharvaveda, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and Aitareya Aranyaka conclusively prove that throughout the post-Rgvedic period represented by the different stages of Vedic literature, the people of Bengal were known to the Āryans and gradually they were coming into contact with them, although Bengal, or at least the greater part of it, was outside the sphere of Āryan culture for a long time. This is also proved by the later work Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra.¹ According to this Sūtra anyone visiting the countries of the Pundras, Vāṅgas and Kalingas had to perform some sacrifices in order to expiate their sin. There is another famous

1. BDS., 1; 2, 14.

legend of Videgha Māthava in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa according to which the sacred fire, the symbol of Āryan culture, started eastward from the borders of the Punjab, but stopped on the banks of the Sadānira river in Oudh.¹

No definite information is available regarding the early history or geography of Bengal previous to its contact with the Vedic Āryans. What was the relation between the inhabitants of Bengal and the Vrātyas or the Kikatas, we do not know. How did they face the Āryans invaders? Where was their original home? Such problems cannot be solved with any degree of precision until further evidence is forthcoming. Pargiter² suggested that the five tribes of the Vaṅgas, Puṇḍras, Aṅgas, etc, entered India by the Sea, first settled along the northern coast of the Bay of Bengal, and gradually extended their power and influence inwards up the Ganges valley. In Bengal they settled themselves in course of time over a wide and compact "wedge-shaped area", bounded by the sea. These

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1. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 1.4,1,10ff. SBE., vol. XII, pp. 104ff. The identification of the Sadānirā which was the boundary between the Kosalas and the Videhas is beset with difficulties. Amarakośa gives it as a synonym of the Karatoyā. Weber's identification with Gandaki is generally accepted, although Mbh. distinguishes it from the Sadānirā.
 2. Pargiter, Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 293; JRAS., 1908, pp. 851-853; JASB., LXVI, Part I, p. 85.

tribes and the Āryans, belonged to different ethnic and cultural types. They met in the neighbourhood of Āṅga (i.e., in Magadha and Videha), exchanged their ideas and gradually settled down as a united people, the product of a continuous process of subtle fusion.¹ But this hypothesis based on the Purāṇic tradition, is not supported by any archaeological evidence, for the people of Pandu Rajar Dhibi who may have come by sea, were certainly non-Āryan, and we have no archaeological evidence of a cultural penetration westward up the Ganga in this manner.

In the Atharva Veda² five geographical divisions of the country are described by the Āryans, based on directions viz., (1) the Dhruva-madhyamā-Pratiṣṭhā diś, (2) the Prācī diś (3) the Udicī diś, (4) the Dakṣiṇā diś and (5) the Praticī diś. Of these five divisions we are more concerned with the first and the second. These divisions or directions are not properly defined in the Vedic literature. The expression Dhruva-diś ^{means} is a cardinal point. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa³ places the territories of

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1. Pargiter, AIHT, p. 293; JRAS., 1908, pp. 851-853; JASB, 1897, LXVI Pt I, p. 85
 2. XIX, 17.1-9.
 3. AB., VIII, 14, 3.

the Kurus, Pāñcālas, Vasas and the Uśīnaras¹ in the Madhyamā-Pratiṣṭhā-diś. ~~¶~~ The Vasas are to be regarded as identical with the Vatsas of Kauśāmbī (Kosām near Allahabad) and the Uśīnaragiri, which according to the Kathāsarit-sāgara,² was situated near Kankhal (Kanakhala), close to Hardwar (Haridvāra).

Manu's Madhyadeśa practically corresponds to the Aryāvarta of the Dharmasūtra of Baudhāyana. Baudhāyana and Vasiṣṭha,³ for instance, state that Aryāvarta lies to the east of Vinaśana,⁴ south of the Himalayas, north of the Pāripātra or Pāriyatra (i.e., the western Vinhyās) in the South and to the west of Kalakavana. Scholars have generally taken Kālakavanana to be the ancient name of the extensive forest in the east, which Rāma entered, after crossing the Ganges⁵ at Śrīngaverapura, identified by Cunningham with the modern town Singor⁶ or Singer about 22 miles northwest of Allahābād. Rāma and his party are

1. Cf. Pāṇini, 11.4.20; IV, 2.118.

2. Lambaka 1, Tarāṅga 3, vv.4-5; Wilson's ed., of the Meghadūta, Calcutta, 1813, v.52, p.59.

3. Darśana or Adarśana in B.D.S.p.11, n. Adarśa in V.D.S. p.1, and in Patañjali, I, 475.

4. B.D.S. (1, 1, 25), V.D.S. (1, 8).

5. Ayodhyā K. XLIX, 3, 7, 13; LII, 7-23; 26.

6. CASR., XI, p.64; XXI, p.11.

said to have arrived at Prayāga (Prayāgam abhitah),¹ after crossing through the forest. The forest was vast and almost impenetrable (sumahad-vanam)². Prayāga was situated in the midst of this forest. The eastern front of the Madhyadeśa was thus in the neighbourhood of Prayāga.

Bengal was outside the limits of the Āryavarta as this term was understood by the authors of the Dharma-sūtras. Madhyadeśa (the middle country) as defined in the Mānava Dharmaśāstra (perhaps 2nd century B.C.) was limited by the Himalayas in the north, the Vindhya in the South, Vinasana (i.e., where the river Sarasvatī disappears in the Rājasthan desert) in the west and Prayāga in the east.

It may be noticed in this connection that in the age of the Dharma Sūtras there were differences of opinion regarding the boundaries of Āryāvarta. According to one view the name Āryāvarta was to be applied only to the Gangetic doab (Ganga-Yamunayor-antaram) i.e., the region round about Kanauj,³ on the other hand some proposed to

1. Ayodhyā K. (LIV, 1-8).

2. Ibid., XCII, 13; XCVIII, 14. Cf. the list of Tīrthas in the Vana-Parva of the Mbh., LXXXV., 1875-1885, JRAS., 1894, pp. 241-2.

3. H.H.Wilson, Vāyu Purāṇa. Vol.IV, p.64, note I; Sachau, Alberuni, vol.I, pp. 173, 198; VDS., (1.12); BDS. (1.1.2, 6).

put its eastern limit in the region where the sun rises, as far as the black antelope wanders.¹

Madhyadeśa, according to the Mānavapharma-Śāstra² denoted the same region which by Vasiṣṭha and Baudhāyana is called Aryāvarta or the land of the Aryas. Rājaśekhara³ who flourished c. 900 A.D. explained Aryāvarta as composed of the territories in which approved practices connected with the systems of the four castes and the four Āśramas prevailed. (Tasmimś-caturvarṇyam catur-āśramyāmś-ca tanmūlaś-ca sad-ācārah). His conception of the limits of Aryāvarta is identical with that in the Mānava Dharma-śāstra. It extends from the Himalayas to the Vindhyaś and from the Western to the eastern sea. He divides Northern India into five parts. It is the Pūrvadeśa of Rājaśekhara, which comprises the territories of Aṅga, Kalinga, Nepala, Kośala, Tośala, Utkala, Magadha, Videha Puṇḍra, Prāgjyotiṣa (Assam), Tāmāliptaka, Malada (?), Mallavartaka, Suhma (W.Bengal) and Brahmottara. Earlier than Rājaśekhara, Varāhamihira (6th cent.A.D.) distributed

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1. VDS., 1.15; BDS., 1, 1, 28; Max Müller, History of Sanskrit Literature, pp. 193, 364; SBE., XIV, 3.
 2. MDS., ii, 21.
 3. Kāvya Mīmāṃsā, Gaekwar Oriental Series; No. 1, p. 93; intro. pp. xxiv-xxvi.

the territories of India on a different basis. He includes in his Madhyadeśa Śāketa on the east. He uses the term Madhyadeśa, but nowhere has he tried to define it. We can infer that his Madhyadeśa included Ayodhyā (Oudh) which appears to have^{been} its eastern limit.

The people of Eastern India used to^{be} called Prācyas in the age of Brāhmaṇas. During this period the Āryans adopted the five-fold divisions of the country. It is quite probable, as Oldenberg¹ suggests, that in certain passages of the Brāhmaṇas, the term Prācyā meant the Kāśīs, Kośālas, Videhas and the Magadhas. But with the growth and advance of geographical knowledge, territories lying further to the east of Magadha must have gradually been included in the meaning of this term. According to the Mahābhārata the Prācyas meant a combination of the Āṅgas, Vāṅgas, Puṇḍras, Magadhas and Tāmraliptakas.

Madhyadeśa of the Buddhist writers differed, at any rate as far as its eastern limit was concerned, from the Middle country as explained in the Brāhmanical literature.² The oldest passage in the Buddhist literature

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1. Buddha, p.393,n; Vedic Index; Vol.II,p.46.
 2. See Oldenberg, vol.I; The Mahāvagga p.197,V,13,12; SBE., XVII,pp.38+39, also Fausböll, Jātaka, 1,49; Rhys Davids Buddhist India, p.201; JRAS.,1870,p.328; Buddhaghōṣa's commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya.,p.1,p.173. (PTS).

where this definition is given is in the fifth Khandaka, the Chammakkhandaka of the Vinaya. In this early Buddhist text Buddha is said to have defined the Majjhimadeśa (Madhyadeśa) as bounded on the north by Mount Uśiraddhaja (Uśīnaragiri) on the South by the town (nigama) Setakannika (situated in the Andhras); on the west^{by the} Brāhmanical village called Thūna; on the south east^{by} the river Salalavatī (Sallavatī) and on the east^{by} the town known as Kajaṅgala. Kajaṅgala which marked the eastern limit of the Buddhist Majjhimadeśa, is to be identified with Ka-chu-wen-ki-lo mentioned by Hsüan Tsang. This country was situated at a distance of about 70 miles to the east of Campā (Bhagalpur) and is now represented by Kaṅkjal, near Rajmahal.

The eastern limit of the Āryāvarta of Baudhāyana extended as far as Prayāga or Kālakavana. The Majjhimadeśa of the early Buddhist writers, on the other hand, included a considerable portion of Bihar. The eastern limit of this country even extended beyond Kajaṅgala according to the later Buddhist literature. In the Buddhist Sanskrit Divyāvadāna¹ the eastern boundary is placed in town called Puṇḍravardhana (Puṇḍravaardhanam nāma nagaram). The the

1. Rhys Davids, JRAS., 1904, pp. 83ff; Div., pp. 21-22. Jātaka (III, 364) includes Vedeha in Majjhima Deśa.

Buddhist Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal up to the river Karatoyā in the east) remained the standard eastern boundary of Madhyadeśa.

There is no definite evidence as to the time when Buddhism first gained influence in Bengal. The Vinayapitaka, which defines the limit of Aryāvarta for the purpose of ordination places its eastern frontier ^{at Kajaṅgala near Rajmahal.} In the Sanskrit texts the eastern limit is Puṇḍravardhana.

It seems to us that Buddhism was known in North Bengal even before Aśoka's time. Traditions about his control of Bengal are recorded in Divyāvadāna¹. It is difficult to say anything on the condition of Buddhism in Bengal during the early centuries of the Christian era. But at the beginning of the Gupta period Buddhism greatly flourished.

The Jainas seem to have been free from any bias against Bengal. The Jaina Prajñāpanā² includes the Vaṅgas and Lādhas in the list of Āryān peoples, while Dravidians

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1. Divyāvadāna, Ed. Cowell and Neil. XXVIII, Vitāśokāvadāna, p. 427.
 2. Weber, Sacred Literature of the Jainas, trans. by Herbert Weir Smyth, IA., 1891, pp. 373, 375.

rank as Milikkhas or Mlecchas (barbarians).

According to traditions recorded in ^{The} Jaini Acārāṅga Sūtra,¹ Mahāvīra was not favourably received by the people of Bengal. There is no evidence to show that he ever crossed the Ganges and went eastward to the country of the Puṇḍras, although there are frequent references to Vaṅga in the Jaina Canon.²

For the Jainas, Aṅga is almost a holy land; Campā the capital was the residence of a large number of holy personages of Jaina legend and history. The Bhagavatī places Aṅga and Vaṅga at the head of a list of sixteen peoples before the Magadhas.

According to the tradition of Divyāvadāna³ the Jainism was established in Puṇḍravardhana before the time of Aśoka. We have another set of Jaina traditions which show that North Bengal and a portion of lower Bengal had contributed to the establishment of the Jaina religion already before the 2nd century B.C. The Kalpasūtra⁴

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1. SBE., 1.8.3. XXII (Jaina Sūtras Pt.I.) p.84.
 2. See Lévi, Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India (English translation by P.C.Bagchi) pp. 73ff.
 3. Aśoka's mastery of Puṇḍravardhana is mentioned in a legend of the Divyāvadāna, which describes how the Ajīvikas of this place incurred his wrath and suffered the consequences of the royal displeasure. Div.ed. by F.B.Cowell & R.A.Neil, 1886, p.427.
 4. Wint.Lit. II 462; the Kalpasūtra is the 8th section of the Ayāradasao or Ācaradaśaka.

is said to have been compiled by Bhadrabāhu who was contemporaneous with Candragupta Maurya. There is no doubt that this work contains very old traditions. It is said that there was a split in the Jaina Church after Bhadrabāhu and this led to the foundation of a number of Schools. According to this tradition¹ Godāsa, a disciple of Bhadrabāhu, was a founder of a school called Godāsa-Gaṇa which had in course of time four śākhās (Branches) three of which are called Tāmraliptika, Kotivarṣa (Dinajpur) and Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal). The fourth Śākhā, called Dāsikharvaṭika may be associated with Kharvaṭa in West Bengal. There is no doubt that Jainism was established in North Bengal long before the reign of Aśoka.

It is true that Brāhmanism took a long time to spread over Bengal. In fact there is no evidence to show that Brāhmanism had any firm hold over this province earlier than the Gupta period. The tradition^{is} recorded in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa² that the descendants of fifty

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1. Jaina Sūtras (trans.by Jacobi) SBE.,XXII.,288.
 2. AB.,VIII,22,p.337,Keith.

exiled sons of Viśvāmitra formed the greater bulk of the Dasyus and one of these Dasyu tribes was the Puṇḍras. This does not show that Brāhmanical culture had spread to Puṇḍra or any other country^{of Bengal}. Thus Āryan culture may have been spread for the first time in ancient Bengal by the Jainas. This is suggested from the fact that the Kalpasūtra mentions not one but four Śākhās of the Godāśa-Gaṇa of Jaina monks named after four places in ancient Bengal.

Though Bengal is not mentioned in the early Vedic Samhitās, at the time of the later Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas the Āryans were gradually coming into contact with this province and adjoining tracts. The gradual stages in the progress of the Āryānisation of Bengal are unknown to us. Probably the adoption of Āryān manners and customs by the primitive tribes of Bengal was a long and tedious process. The indigenous tribes like the Vaṅgas, the Suhmas, the Sabaras, the Pulindas, the Kirāṭas and the Puṇḍras were known as the Dasyus at the time of Dharma-sūtras, but they are known as Kṣatriyas in somewhat later literature,¹ such as Manu, the Mahābhārata, and the Viṣṇu

1. Manu, X.44; Mbh., I, 104.II.51, XIV, 29; Viṣṇu Purāṇa. IV 8.1; Matsya Purāṇa. 48, 24ff.

and Matsya Purāṇas.

While early Dharmasūtras confine the land of the Aryans to the upper Ganges valley; the author of the Manava Dharmaśāstra extends it from the western to the eastern sea. It should be noted that the law-giver brands the Puṇḍras as degraded Kṣatriyas and classes them with Dravidians, Scythians and Chinese. The Sabhā-parvan of the Mahābhārata, on the contrary, refers to the Vaṅgas and the Puṇḍras as well-born Kṣatriyas. The testimony of the epic accords with that of the Jaina Prajñāpanā which includes the Vaṅgas and Lādhas in the list of Āryān peoples.

By the time when the Tīrthayātra section of the Great Epic was composed, the valley of the Karatoyā, as well as the lower Ganges where the river flows into the sea, had become sacred spots.

CHAPTER II

The History of Bengal from the earliest
times to the Mauryan period.

As V. Smith says, 'the vision of the historian cannot pass the line which separates the dated from the undated'. In the case of Bengal dated history begins only from B.C. 326. Before this date we have very little knowledge of it, and practically we do not possess any authentic history of Bengal.

Most probably there was some kind of organised social and political life in Bengal many centuries before, but we do not have any detailed information about it. The little that we know of the earliest period is derived almost entirely from the Vedic, Buddhist and Jaina literature. We have very limited epigraphical sources of the early history of Bengal before the Gupta period and we have mainly to depend on traditions for our knowledge. But it is very difficult to present an accurate chronological background from the traditional accounts, because the data of ancient traditions provide only disconnected fragments of information.

About the political history of Bengal, Vedic literature gives no detailed information except that it

was a country inhabited by a number of tribes such as the Pundra,¹ the Vaṅga² etc. No Bengal king is mentioned either in the hymns or in the Vedic texts on ritual and philosophy, as is Sudās, hero of the Tritsus, Janamejaya, emperor of the Kurus, or Janaka, the philosopher-king of the Vidēhas.

The Prāchyas, or Easterners, become gradually more familiar to the later Vedic and the post-Vedic literature and before the Mauryan period they already constituted a definite factor in the political and the cultural history of India. The Mahābhārata tradition preserves evidence of a close contact between Magadha and Bengal. Jarāsandha, the King of Magadha, is said to have played an important part in the political field. Among his supporters were the Kings of Vaṅga and Pundra, Kirātas and others.³

Four kingdoms of Bengal are mentioned by name in the Sabhāparvan of the ^{Mahābhārata} ~~MBh.~~, these are Suhma, Prasuhma,

1. AB., VIII, 22, p. 337. Keith.

2. AA., II, 1.1, p. 200.

3. MBh., (Sabhā-Parva) pp. 45ff. (P.C. Roy (trans.), 1884. vol. 2.)

Vaṅga, ^{and} Tāmralipta; ^{The Kings of These} and the kings dwelling on the sea-shore were all defeated by Bhīmasena, the son of Pāṇdu during his digvijaya.¹ The Great Epic ^{also} refers to victorious campaigns undertaken by Karna and Kṛṣṇa in these parts of India. Karna, King of Aṅga is said to have defeated the Suhmas, the Puṇḍras and the Vaṅgas and constituted Vaṅga and Aṅga into ^aViṣaya of which he was the ruler.

In the Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa of ^{The} Ramāyaṇa,² where it is proposed to invite some kings on the occasion of a sacrifice to be performed by Daśaratha, the Prācyas are mentioned as being ruled by their own kings. The term Prācyāḥ may indicate Magadha and Vaṅga. If there is any truth in this passage, it may be suggested that Vaṅga may have entered into a friendly relation⁵ with Ayodhyā. We have another story of the victorious campaigns of Daśaratha's ancestor King Raghu in Suhma, as described by Kālidāsa in the 5th century A.D.³

1. Ibid., pp. 86ff.

2. Prācyās* ca Sindhu-Sauvīrāḥ Surāstre ye ca parthivāḥ // Dākṣiṇātyā nareन्द्रāḥ ca Sarvān ānaya me ciram, Rām. I.XII.

3. Raghuvamśa, Canto IV., verses 39, 40, 41. p.55.

It appears from the traditions of ^{the} Epics that Bengal was divided into a number of petty states which often had to fight for their independence with the kings of the Midland country.

The description of Āṅga in the Great Epic and the Buddhist Literature seems to indicate that some portions of Bengal were sometimes included within it. Karna, the King of Āṅga is said to have collected troops from Āṅga, Vāṅga, Puṇḍra and Kalinga to support the ^uKaravas. The Buddhist Literature bears ample testimony to the greatness of this kingdom. It ~~seems~~ ^{appears} first in the list of the Sixteen Great Kingdoms in the Āṅuttara Nikāya.¹

A few punch-marked coins have been found in Bengal. They bear the impress of an early age. Five copper coins (4 rectangular and 1 round) of the punch-marked type were recovered from Tamruk, the ancient Tāmralipti, and prove the site to be of considerable antiquity. The find also brought a silver punch-marked coin on which two symbols, the sun and the Svastika,

1. Āṅuttara Nikāya = I, 213; IV, 252, 256, 260.

could be recognised. Six other examples of the same well known type of silver coin usually called Purānas or Dharanas were discovered at the village of Zarka in the 24 Parganas.¹ Several cast coins were also found at Tamruk along with the punch-marked coins mentioned above. The symbols on these coins are not different from those coins of the same type, which have been discovered from other parts of India; they include elephant, deer or stag, frog, fish, tree, triratna, svastika, rails, torana etc.²

The problem of punch-marked coins is one of the most difficult in the Indian coin series. The name punch-marked was first given by Prinsep.³ Punch-marked coins are^{of} two kinds - silver and copper. It is interesting that these coins have been found in many parts of India; evidently they were current practically all over India. Various symbols are executed on these coins; most of these seem to have no religious significance, either Hindu or Buddhist.

1. Proc. ASB., 1879, p. 245.

2. Proc. ASB., 1882, pp. 111-13; Allan, Coins of Ancient India., Intro. XIX ff; D.D. Kosambi, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, pp. 167ff; JNS., vol. XXII (1960) pp. 1 ff.

3. JASB., (1835) IV, p. 627.

The copper coins with punch-marks catalogued in the British Museum offer no variety in type but the great variation in weight. The method of manufacture is apparent. 'The flans were chopped out of long bars of copper and then punched with symbols, five on one side and four on the other'.¹

The punch-marked coins are admitted by all scholars to be the earliest indigenous currency. But opinions differ as to the date of the most ancient specimens of Indian coinage. Cunningham puts the beginnings of Indian currency at about 1000 B.C., while according to Smith "the heavy bent bars of silver..... bearing an extremely archaic appearance are the oldest available coins which may go back to about 600 B.C."²

We have no evidence from literature about the date of these coins. The frequent references in the Sūtras to Karṣāpanas and other coins do not lead us beyond the third century B.C. Nārada³ statesent that ^{the} Karṣāpana is a silver coin in the southern country.

1. Allan, op.cit. p.lxxviii.

2. CCIM., pp. 133-36, Nos. 4-6.

3. Nārada Smṛti, App. 57, SBE., vol. XXXIII, p.231.

In the Jātaka, the coin most frequently mentioned is the kaḥāpāna (kārṣāpāna), which is to be identified with the silver punch-marked coin.¹ The name Purāṇa (meaning the old-fashioned) is not found in the Jātaka; but it is mentioned in the Divyāvadāna.^a

An important find is recorded by Sir John Marshall from Bhīr mound at Taxila, which consisted of 1,167 silver coins and some jewellery in an earthenware pot six feet below the second stratum, which had already been judged to belong to the third or fourth century B.C.² The specimens from the Bhīr Mound include two important hoards. Dr. Allan³ infers that both hoards were buried at the same time - probably in the early part of the second century B.C. But according to Marshall⁴ the larger hoard was buried before the smaller, and he points out that the coins in the larger hoard are earlier types than the bulk of those in the smaller hoard. Marshall comes to the conclusion, that (a) "the larger hoard was buried round

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1. Allan, op.cit. p. clx. 1^a. cf. Allan, op.cit., p. c lx.
 2. J. Marshall, Taxila, vol. II p. 751 ff.
 3. Taxila, vol. II, p. 854-5.
 4. Marshall, op.cit. p. 751. the plate references are to those in the same work.

about 300 B.C. or possibly a little later; (b) the oblong bar coins in that hoard (Pl.234, nos. 1-7), which were in a worn condition at the time of its burial, were issued in the fourth or possibly in the late fifth century B.C. (c) The punch-marked coins which constitute the bulk of the larger hoard (Pl.234, nos. 24-48 = B.M.Cat.Class(6) and the minute coins (Pl.234, nos. 8-23) were being issued about 300 B.C., when the hoard was buried, but probably came, as Dr. Allan conjectures from somewhere outside the North-western area. (d) The smaller hoard was buried about the end of the third century B.C. (e) The latest class of punch-marked coins found in that group (cf. Pl.234, nos. 49-59 = B.M.Cat.class 2) were current at that time". Besides these two important hoards, "the Bhir Mound yielded 245 other coins found either singly or in small groups among the ruins. Sixty-three of these were punch-marked, 179 local Taxilan, and one each of Demetrius, Azes I and Vasudeva. Of the sixty-three punch-marked, twenty eight belong to the oldest classes of coins struck in the North West, eight being long-bars (five silver and three copper) and twenty 'round and concave' (thirteen

silver and seven copper). The former are of the type illustrated on Pl.234, nos. 1-7,¹; the latter of the type illustrated in the B.M.Cat. Pl.1, nos. 4-6. The remaining thirty-five specimens are the more usual kinds of later punch-marked issues, twenty-three being rectangular (16 silver and 7 copper) and twelve round or oval (8 silver and 4 copper)."

These coins are found in the first, second, third and fourth strata. According to Marshall the date of coins of the third and fourth strata must be ^{put} back to the fourth or possibly fifth century B.C. After making all painstaking efforts, he puts the earliest types of punch-marked coins, round about 400 B.C.²

The Bhir Mound yielded 134 local copper coins~~ge~~ which come from the Second or Maurya stratum.³ Marshall says "It would be unsafe, therefore, to infer that any of these local coins of Taxila were struck before the third century B.C., but from that time on until the coming of the Greeks, and perhaps for some time afterwards, they

1. Cf. B.M.Cat.Pl.1,nos.1-3.

2. Marshall, op.cit., p.752.

3. Ibid., p.756.

must, to judge by the numbers recovered, have been issued in abundance".¹ Dr.Allan² says that "this coinage was seemingly a short-lived one, beginning late in the third century B.C. under Maurya governors and ending with the Greek conquest before the middle of the Second Century B.C. It seems that the earliest date of punch-marked coins can be placed before the invasion of Alexander. Thus the date of the introduction of coinage into India is still disputed. Some scholars still maintain that it was already widely current at the time of the Buddha, while others hold that it began in the period between the Buddha and Mauryas.³ As well as the Taxila evidence, the fact that the word karsa⁴ appears to be Iranian origin would tend to favour the latter hypothesis. Though after the fall of the Mauryas inscribed coins became current, the older punch-marked types may have remained in circulation for several centuries in certain parts of India, where local coinage was not issued.

1. Ibid.

2. B.M.Cat. p.CXXXIX.

3. Allan, B.M.Cat., Ancient India, p. clxiii.

4. JRAS., 1916, p.366.

It is also a matter of controversy whether the introduction of copper as a monetary medium preceded that of silver.¹ The punch-marked coins are generally believed to have been issued by private bodies, controlled by the ruling powers of the different regions.

When Bimbisāra became the King of Magadha he finally annexed Āṅga to his kingdom in the sixth century B.C. The conquest of Āṅga paved the way for the Magadhan Imperialism. One after another, the important states of Northern India had to acknowledge the supremacy of Magadha.

But the fall of Āṅga did not mean the fall of Bengal. Towards the close of the fourth century B.C. a powerful kingdom flourished in lower Bengal. This is referred to by the Greek writers as the kingdom of the Gangaridai.

The position of the Gangaridai may be ascertained

1. S.K.Chakravarti, A Study of Ancient Indian Numismatics; p. 31.

from the data supplied by the Greeks.¹ Their land lay to the east of that of the Prasii whose capital was at Palibothra, which is undoubtedly Pāṭaliputra. The Prasii must thus denote the people of Magadha. We know from Pliny² that the final part of the course of the Ganges lay through the country of the Gangarides. Diodorus³ says that the Ganges empties its waters into the ocean, from the eastern boundary of the land of the Gandaridai. In another passage he locates "beyond the Ganges the dominions of the nation of the Braisioi and the Gandaridai whose king had 4000 elephants trained and equipped for war".⁴ Evidently Gandaridai of Diodorus stands for Gangaridai, the mistake being due to the confusion between Gaṅgā and Gandhāra. Ptolemy⁵ says that "all the country about the mouths of the Ganges is occupied by the Gangaridai". On the basis of these data the Gangaridai must have occupied the country between the

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1. McCrindle = Megasthenes, pp. 33ff; Invasion of India by Alexander, pp. 364-5, 221-22, 281, 282, 310; McCrindle = Ptolemy, p. 173. See R.C. Majumdar, Classical Accounts of India.
 2. Megasthenes and Arrian, p. 137; Monohan. E.H.B. p.5.
 3. Bk. II, p.37.
 4. Bk. XVII, p.93.
 5. McCrindle, op.cit., p.173.

eastern boundary of Magadha and the mouth of the Padmā i.e., the ancient Aṅga, Suhma and part of Vaṅga or the present Presidency Division and part of Bhāgalpur, Burdwan and Dacca Division. Etymologically the word Gangaridae would imply the people of the Ganges Valley as a whole, but evidently Greek and Latin writers use it to refer to the people of ancient Vaṅga. Curtius, Plutarch and Solinus¹ agree in placing them on the eastern bank of the Ganges.

The people called by Diodorus Braisioi, Bresioi or Breisioi, by Quintus Curtius Pharrasii, and by Plutarch Praisioi are the same as those to whom Strabo Pliny and Arrian give the name of Prasii. The name Prasii must surely represent the Sanskrit Prācya, meaning 'eastern'.

The people called by Diodorus Gandaridai and by Plutarch Gandaritai are obviously the same as the Ganga-rides^{or Gangaridae} of Pliny, Quintus Curtius and Ptolemy. It would be expected that this word would apply to all the people

1. McGrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, pp. 221-310; Megasthenes and Arrian (1926) p.160.

2. Gangaridae.
3. Gandaridai.

living near the Ganga River, but the classical authors confined ^{them} to Bengal. No name like it is to be found in any Sanskrit or other ancient Indian source as referring to a people, and we suspect that it is the result of a confusion on the part of the original Greek source of this information, which seems to have been acquired in the course of Alexander's campaign. Possibly the original word was Vaṅga or Aṅga or even both together. By the well known propensity of foreign visitors to confuse a little known with a better known word, this may have been heard as Gaṅga or quickly corrupted into this form. The ar element in the word was probably added on the analogy of the word Gandhāra, since it is clear that there was confusion of these two words in the minds of classical authors. Finally the addition of a Greek ^{nominal ending} ~~suffix~~ produced the form Gangaridae.

It is not possible to determine the precise boundary line between the Gangaridai proper and the Prasii, who had their capital at Pāṭaliputra. The evidence of Ptolemy suggests that in his times Pāṭaliputra was the royal residence of a kingdom which apparently extended as far as the Ganges ^{delta} and may have included Tāmralipti. The

Gangaridai lay beyond this territory.

Diodorus (49 B.C.-A.D.14) says, "He (Alexander) had obtained from Phegeus (a local Indian chief) a description of the country beyond the Indus. First came a desert, which it would take twelve days to traverse; beyond this was the river called the Ganges, which had a width of thirty-two Stadia, and a greater depth than any other Indian river; beyond this again were situated the dominions of the nation of the Braisioi and the Gandaridai, whose king, Xandrames, had an army of 20,000 horse, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots, and 4,000 elephants trained and equipped for war. Poros¹ assured him of the correctness of the information, but added that the king of the Gandaridai was a man of quite worthless character, and held in no respect, as he was thought to be the son of a barber. This man, the king's father, was of a comely person, and of him the Queen had become deeply enamoured. The old king, having been treacherously murdered by his wife, the succession had devolved on him who

1. The Punjab chief, whom Alexander had defeated at the Hydaspes (Jehlum) in the preceeding July, and who had become his ally.

now reigned".¹ In another passage Diodorus says, "Among the southern countries, the first under Kaukasos is India, a kingdom remarkable for its vast extent and the largeness of its population, for it is inhabited by very many nations, among which the greatest of all is that of Gandaridai, against whom Alexander did not undertake an expedition, being deterred by the multitude of their elephants".²

Quintus Curtius³ (A.D.70-9) narrates that, after Alexander had reached the Hyphasis, he asked an Indian chief named Phegeus for information about the country beyond, and was told that beyond the river lay extensive deserts which it would take eleven days to cross. Next came the Ganges, the largest river in all India, the farther bank of which was inhabited by two nations the Gangaridae and the Pharrasii, whose king, Agrammes, kept in the field 20,000 cavalry and 200,000 infantry, besides 2,000 four-horsed chariots and 3,000 elephants equipped for war. The only difference is that Curtius refers to

1. Diodorus, XVII,93. McCrindle's translations are followed in these quotations.

2. Diodorus, XVIII.6.

3. ~~Plutarch, Alexander, 70-71.~~
BK IX, ch II, 2-7

the number of the elephants as 3,000 whereas Diodorus gives the number as 4,000.

The description of the desert over which the troops would have to march twelve days to reach the Gaṅgā seems rather to refer to the Thar of Eastern Rājasthan than to the region to the East of the Beas, and it is evident that some confusion has entered into the account. But we have no reason to believe that the statement about the Prasii and the Gangaridae, occurring in so many sources, is not based on information transmitted from the companions of Alexander.

Plutarch says "the kings of the Gandaritai and the Praisioi were reported to be waiting for him (Alexander) with an army of 80,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 8,000 war chariots and 6,000 fighting elephants".¹

The king mentioned by Diodorus and Curtius is said to have had only 20,000 horse, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 four-horsed chariots and 4,000 or 3,000 elephants. Additional forces are mentioned by Plutarch. How far Plutarch's account is true, it is difficult to say, but

1. Alexander, p.62.2

he is known to have exaggerated in other contexts, and his reputation for reliability is not high among classical historians. It is, however, worthy of notice that the number of foot soldiers remains constant in the three accounts. It is significant that a few lines farther on Plutarch, too, like Curtius and Diodorus, speaks of the "whole country" beyond the Ganges, which "Alexander could easily have taken possession of", as the domain of the king who "was hated and despised by his subjects for the wickedness of his disposition and the meanness of his origin" - characteristics which cannot fail to recall the famous description of Agrammes by Curtius and of Xandrames by Diodorus.

Strabo says "The river Ganges, which is the largest in India, descends from the mountainous country and turns eastward upon its reaching the plains. Then flowing past Palibothra, a very large city, it pursues its way to the sea in that quarter and discharges into it by a single mouth."¹ He says also "A letter written by Krateros² to his mother, has been published which contains

1. XV.1.13.

2. One of Alexander's generals.

many other singular statements, and differs from every other writer, especially in saying that Alexander advanced as far as the Ganges". These traditions obviously contain inaccuracies. Alexander never reached the Ganges, though he might have heard about the prowess of the Gangaridae when he was on the bank of the Beas.

It is clear from Pliny's account that the countries of the Gangarides and Kalingas were adjacent territories. He mentions one tribe called MaccoCalingae and another called Modokalinga living on an island in the Ganges. From this statement of Pliny, Viven de Saint Martin concluded that there were three branches of the Kalingas. Their country was nearest to the sea and their capital was called Parthalis, which has been identified with Purvasthali, a large village about 20 miles from the present town of Burdwan.¹ The common ethnic character of Anga, Vaṅga, Kalinga, Puṇḍra and Suhma has already been emphasised. It is probable that a branch of the Kalingas also inhabited some part of

1. IHQ., IV, p. 55.

western Bengal and were allied with the Gangaridae.

It is a significant fact that no writer definitely calls the Gangaridae subordinate to the Prasii. Monohan rightly noticed that "it is not certain whether the two peoples (i.e. the Gangaridae and the Prasii) at the time of Alexander's invasion formed one state or confederation, but the evidence seems on the whole to point to two states with separate kings and forces, but united in a close confederation - so close that the population of both was sometimes included under one name as Prasii or as Gangarides". It is noteworthy that Diodorus definitely calls Xandrames king of the Gangaridae.

Smith and others have assumed that the Gangaridae were subordinate to the Prasii. Curtius refers to the two nations and their king as "The Gangaridae and the Prasii whose king Agrammes" kept a vast army.¹ Diodorus² and Q.Curtius³ agree with Diodorus, with slight variations in the names.

Agrammes or Xandrames was probably no other than

Curtius BK.IX II, 2-7;

1. / McCrindle - Invasion of India by Alexander the Great.
pp. 221-2.

2. Ibid., pp. 281-282, Diodorus BK. xvii, 93.

3.

the successor of the Nanda, usurper who had killed the last king of the Śaiśunāga Dynasty. "He was held in no respect" Diodorus says "as he was thought to be the son of a barber".¹

If the Gangaridae were so powerful towards the close of the fourth century B.C., it seems that they must have established their greatness sometimes before that time. It would appear that Bimbisāra's victory over Aṅga led to new political developments. The Gangaridai seem to have even included the people of Kalinga, for Pliny mentions the kingdom as Gangaridae - Kalinga. According to the Greek writers the Kalingas at this time extended up to the Bhāgirathī and thus certainly included the present Midnapur district.² This is also quite probable from the statement of the Purāṇas that the Kalingas were closely allied to the different tribes of Bengal.

The Mauryan Brāhmī Inscription of Mahāsthān.

This is the earliest inscription so far as

1. McCrindle - Invasion of India, p. 310.

2. E.H.B.R. p. 11.

discovered in Bengal. It consists of six lines of writing in Brāhmī script of the Maurya period. The type of Brāhmī is very similar to that of the inscriptions of Aśoka. It is written in a Prākṛit similar to that which is used in the Pillar Edicts of Aśoka which is the language of Madhyadeśa influenced by Māgadhī, and was the court language of Magadha. The record is a fragmentary one and cannot be interpreted without a certain amount of conjecture.

The upper part of the inscription is broken, and so many words are effaced. Bhandarkar and Barua have interpreted the inscription thoroughly. Every word of the record has been explained in their respective articles.¹ Here we will discuss only a few points on the basis of their articles, as there is no need to reinterpret the entire inscription.

It seems that the inscription begins with nena which according to Bhandarkar, is the end of a word such as śāsanena or vacanena, more probably the former rather than the latter. His interpretation is as follows:-

1. R.G.Bhandarkar, EI., XXI, pp. 83 ff; B.M.Barua IHQ., XI, pp. 57ff; See also SI., pp. 82-83.

- (1) nena sa(ṁ)va(ṁ)gīy(ā)naṁ(galadanasa)
Dumadina (mahā)
- (2) māte, Sulakhite Puḍanagalate, e(ta)ṁ
- (3) (ni) vahipayisati, Saṁva(ṁ)gīyanaṁ
(cha-di) ne (tathā)
- (4) (dhā) niyaṁ, nivahisati da(ṁ)g(ā)tiyā
(i)k(e)d (evā)
- (5) (tiya)(yī) kasi, Su-atiyāyika(si) pi,
gaṁda (kehi).
- (6) (dhāni) (yī) kehi esa koṭhāgale koṣam
(bhara)
- (7) (niye)

He gives no translation, but writes on this inscription as follows:-

"It appears that some ruler of the Mauryan period, if not the Mauryan family, had issued an order to the Mahāmātra stationed at Puṇḍranagara with a view to relieving the distress caused by famine to the people called Saṁvaṁgīyas, who were settled in and around the town. Two measures appear to have been adopted to meet this contingency. The exact nature of the first is not clear, as the first original line of our record

has not been preserved. But it may be surmised that this measure consisted of the advance of a loan in Gaṇḍaka coins to Galadana who presumably was a leader of the Samvaṅgiyas. The Mahāmātra of Puṇḍranagara was entrusted with the execution of this order. The second measure consisted of the distribution of dhānya or paddy from the granary. A wish is then expressed as soon as these measures are carried out, the Samvaṅgiyas will be able to tide over the calamity. With the restoration of profusion and affluence they have been asked to return the coins to the treasury and the corn to the granary to pay the state back in kind or cash."¹

The second word of the record in the first line Bhandarkar read as Samvaṅgiyānam "of the Samvaṅgiya (tribe). In the second line we have the word Puṇḍanagalate (Skt. Puṇḍranagaratas = from Puṇḍranagara). Bhandarkar suggested that vaṅgiya meant the Vajjis, the name of a tribe. He suggested that the confederation of the different Vajji clans was sometimes called Samvajjī (united Vajji). As an alternative he suggested that it is not

1. EI., XXI, p. 87.

unreasonable to think that different clans of Vaṅga were united like the Vajjis under the name Samvaṅgiya (united Vaṅga). On the contrary Barua read the word as Savagiya and suggested that they were not the tribesmen of Vaṅga. He cited the Gabbhinī Sutta¹ as an instance in order to confirm his views. He read the record as follows:-

- (1) (a) nena Savagiyānaṃ t(e)lad(i) nasa dumaṃ dina s(u)
- (2) māte Sulakhite Puṇḍanagalate etaṃ
- (3) nivahipayisati Savagiyānaṃ ca(di) ne
- (4) dhāniyaṃ nivahisati Dagatīyāy(i)ke pi a (gi)
- (5) (tiyā) yikasi su ati yāyikasi pi gaṇḍa (kehi)
- (6) (kākaṇi) yikehi esa koṭhāgale kosaṃ....
- (7)

Barua translates the above record as follows:-

"By this (token) should there be any oil or tree given to the Śaḍvargikas (he, the person concerned) shall cause that to be conveyed from S (u) mā, Sulakṣmī and Puṇḍranagara. (He) shall convey also the paddy given to the Śaḍvargikas. The treasure chamber in this

1. Uḍāna, II, 6.

store-house (shall be filled) with Gaṇḍakas¹ and Kākanikas² in emergency due to water in emergency due to (fire) also in emergency due to parrots."³

According to Barua Savagiyas were a body of religious men to whom money (gaṇḍaka) and paddy (dhāniyam) were given by the people of Puṇḍranagara and the inhabitants of two neighbouring places called Sumā and Sulakhi. He shows the instance of Gabbhinī Sutta⁴ which mentions that some of the royal stores were kept up to distribute to 'all men of religion' whether of the Samāna or of the Brāhmaṇa order, oil and clarified butter (tela, sappi) for their consumption on the particular spot. In the view of Barua the Savagiyas of the Mahāsthān inscription are the same as the Buddhist Ṣaḍvargya or Ṣaḍvargika (Pāli Chabbaggiya) bhikkhus.

The Vinaya texts represent the Chabbaggiyas as a group of bhikkhus under the leadership of Assaji,

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1. Gaṇḍaka is a small coin of the value of four cowries, IHQ., X, p. 59 fn. 22.
 2. Kākanika (Skt. kākani) is a small coin of the value of twenty cowries, ibid., fn. 23.
 3. IHQ., X, pp. 58-59.
 4. Udana. II. 6.

Punabbasu, Paṇḍuka, Lohitaka, Mettiya and Bhummajaka. They are described in the Vinaya tradition as alajjino pāpa-bhikkhu 'shameless and wicked monks, mischief-makers, recklessly wicked'. In early Buddhism the five original disciples of Buddha were known as Pañca-vaggiyas or 'the Band of five disciples'. The Chabbaggiyas formed a ^{similar} Band of Six men with their adherents, who were always acting contrary to the rules and regulations of the Vinaya discipline. These texts also mention the Chabbaggiya, bhikkhunīs, forming a set of bhikkhunīs under the leadership of six women assuming the same names as the leaders of the Chabbaggiya bhikkhus. These bhikkhunīs are described as the same type of mischief-makers in the female section of the Order, who always worked with the Chabbaggiya bhikkhus. During the Buddha's time Śrāvastī, Rājagṛha and Kitāgiri¹ became the great centres of their work.

Another group of men under the leadership of Devadatta and Kokālika are also known as Samghabhedaka

1. Kitāgiri was a township of Kāśī situated between Benaras and Śrāvastī, Majjhima Nikāya, Kitāgiri-Sutta, 473 ff Cullavagga, I.13.

or schismatics. Deyadatta and his followers are notorious. He was a terrible man, whose hostile actions were directed against Gautama Buddha personally. These Samgha-bhedakas had walked out in a group to establish a distinct sect of their own.¹

As regards the leaders of the Chabbaggiyas, Buddha Ghosa says that they were six friends and all boys of Śāvatthī (Śrāvastī).² They decided to abstain from hard work for their livelihood and hence joined the Buddhist Order. They were initiated by Sāriputta and Moggallāna and studied the mātikās for five years. After studying the mātikās they began to think that the right course of life for them would be not to stay all in one place for a long time, because there might be sometimes scarcity (dubbhikṣa) of food and sometimes plenty (subbhikṣa). With this idea they chose Śrāvastī, Rājagṛha and Kitāgiri as suitable places for their residence. Of these places, Śrāvastī was the most

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1. Vinaya, Cullavagga, VIII.1; Oldenberg's Buddha pp. 160-161; N.Dutt, Early History of the spread of Buddhism; p.222.
 2. The story of the Chabbaggiyas in the Jātakātthavannanā (Fausböll's Jātaka) the Dhammapada - Commentary.

populous and prosperous city in the kingdom of Kāśī and Kośala, and Rājagṛha was similarly the most populous and flourishing city in the whole of Aṅga and Magadha. Kīṭāgiri was a very fertile land with an abundance of rain-water which enabled it to grow plenty of food-grains. They advised Paṇḍuka and Lohitaka to erect parivenas (monastic abodes or monks' cells) in public places in the neighbourhood of Śrāvastī and maintained fruit and flower gardens for local needs in order to gain popular sympathy and gradually to recruit converts from among the young men of the neighbourhood. Mettiya and Bhummajaka were similarly instructed to select Rājagṛha, and Assaji and Puṇabbasu, Kīṭāgiri for their residence and work. According to the instructions they soon succeeded in collecting about five hundred followers at each centre. Paṇḍuka and Lohitaka were good enough to move about in the country in the company of the Buddha and did not try to foment trouble, but the other four leaders not only violated the rules but always fomented fresh discontent, thus necessitating the framing and enforcement of new rules.¹

1. Samanta-Pāsādika, Pāli Text Society, 1927, 1930. ed. pt. II, pp. 614.

The view of Barua is that these Chabbaggiyas of the Vinaya texts were settled in Puṇḍranagara, but we do not possess any evidence to show that this was the case. According to the Gabbhinī Sutta, the royal store-house was kept in Śrāvastī from which any man of religion, whether of the Samāna or of the Brāhmaṇa order was allowed to obtain as much oil or clarified butter as he needed for use in that place only; but he was not allowed to take away anything out of the store for consumption elsewhere. This sutta does not mention at all that a royal store-house was also to be found in Puṇḍranagara. Moreover, Puṇḍranagara is not mentioned at all in the Vinaya texts which contain the different stories of the Chabbaggiyas. These texts clearly mention that Śrāvastī, Rājagṛha and Kīṭāgiri were the main centres of the Chabbaggiyas. Buddhaghosa also states that these three places became their residences and the scenes of their further activities. The six leaders of the Chabbaggiyas were all young men of Śrāvastī, and Puṇḍravardhana is nowhere mentioned in the early Buddhist texts.

So we cannot accept the view of Barua, who thinks that the Buddhist Chabbaggiyas were in Puṇḍra-

vardhananagara in the third century B.C. In our opinion Bhandarkar's conjectural interpretation of the word seems more likely than that of Barua. D.C. Sircar¹ thinks that Samvarga might have been the name of a locality, but we cannot accept this because we do not possess any evidence of a locality of this name.

We agree with Bhandarkar that the word Samvaṅgiya somewhat suggests Samvajjis. We know the name Fu-li-chi (Vrjji) from the account of Hsüan Tsang, some editions of whose travels state that the Vajji country was called Sam-fa-chi (or Sam-vajji).² On this point Beal makes the following comment:-

"The country of the Vrjjis or Samvrjjis i.e., united Vrjjis was of the people called the Vajjis one of which, that of the Lichhavis, dwelt at Vaisāli."³

"Just as the eight confederate clans of whom the Vajjis were once the most important were called collectively the Samvajjis or the united Vajjis, so it is not at all

1. D.C.Sircar. SI, p.83, fn. 5.

2. In the Buddhist books Vrjji, the Pāli Vajji is the name of a tribe inhabiting an extensive region of which Vaisāli was the capital and also of the country which this people occupied.

3. Buddhist Records of the Western World, II, p.77, n.100.

unreasonable to conjecture that there were some confederate clans in East Bengal who were similarly conglomerated under the collective term Samvāṅgiyas.¹

This argument is quite strong, but the correspondence between Samvāṅgiya and Samvṛjji is not after all very close. On the other hand, the word in the inscription we have the name of Vaṅga, the Southern part of Bengal, almost correctly spelt, with a prefix and a suffix. In the Vāyu and Matsya Purāṇas, in the chapters dealing with Bhuvana-Vinyāsa, two allied clans, the Pravaṅgas and the Vaṅgēyas are mentioned.² But there is no mention of the name of Vaṅga. We agree with Bhandarkar who remarks that Vaṅgēya comes very close to the Vaṅgiya of the Mahāsthān Inscription, though our record is much earlier than any of these Purāṇas. It seems that Vaṅgiya must be the original form of the Vaṅgēya of the Purāṇas which is written in a corrupt form. The Pravaṅgas are coupled with the Vaṅgiyas (wrongly called Vaṅgēyas) in these early Purāṇas. Thus

1. EI., XXI, p. 91.

2. Ibid.

^{suggests} shows that they were confederated clans and may, like the Saṁvajjis, have been referred to together as the Saṁvaṅgiyas.¹ It seems that the Puṇḍras also belonged to the Saṁvaṅgiya confederacy. As we have seen before, the people of Bengal sometimes joined together in order to deal with a common problem. So it would not be impossible to think that when emergencies arose different tribes of Vaṅga were united under the name of Saṁvaṅgiya in order to cope with them.

We would like to interpret here another word of our record which appears in the fifth line of the inscription. This is Su-atiyāyikasi. The view of Barua is that there are three kinds of emergencies (atiyāyika) which are mentioned in the Mahāsthān inscription. He² says that the first emergency of the record is daga-atiyāyika, "one arising from the action of water", (daga = daka Skt. udaka)³. The second may have been "one arising from the action of fire (agi). The third is sua-atiyāyika (suka-atiyāyika) "one arising from the action of parrots".

1. Bhandarkar, op.cit. p.91.

2. Barua, op.cit., p.66.

3. Barua also suggests the alternative interpretation of daka as 'demon', on the basis of the Pāli.

On the contrary Bhandarkar says that the record speaks of only two atīyāyikas, daiv-ātiyāyika and su-ātiyāyika. In the opinion of Bhandarkar daiv-ātiyāyika refers to a transgression or adversity caused by the gods or superhuman agents. It seems that the daiv-ātiyāyika which came to the Saṃvāṃgīyas was no other than a famine which occurred from the action of floods. On the other hand he renders Su-atīyāyika as "excess", "plenty" on the basis of the Sohgaura copper plate,¹ which undoubtedly belongs to the same period as our record, and which has been explained in different ways. There is a close similarity between the Sohgaura copper plate and the Mahāsthān Brāhmī Inscription. Bühler read the Sohgaura Plates as follows:-

- (1) saṃvatiyana mahama(ta)na sasane Manavasitika-
- (2) ḍa (1) Silimate vasagame va ete duve koṭhagalani-
- (3) tighavani mathu-laca-camoḍamma-bhalakanacha-
- (4) la kayiyati atiyāyikaya (1) no gahi(ta) vaya (1)

1. This Sohgaura copper plate was first edited by Bühler in the Vienna Oriental Journal vol.X., pp.138 ff. and Ind.Ant. vol.XXV, pp.261ff; afterwards by Fleet in JRAS., 1907, pp. 510ff and lastly by Barua in ABORI, V, XI, pp.52 ff. See also Select Inscriptions, pp.85ff. No. 47.

sanatīyāna Mahāma(ta)na Sāsane Mananasitikaḍā (1)

silimāte vaṃsagāme va ete duve

koṭṭhāgaṭani tighavani mathu-lācā-camodaṃma-bhālakāne.

calaṃ kayiyati atiyāyikāya (1) no gahitāvayaṃ (1)

He translates it as follows:-

"The order of the great officials of Śrāvastī, (issued) from (their camp at) Manavasitikalā; These two store-houses with three partitions (which are situated) even in famous Vaṃśa grāma, require the storage of loads of Black Panicum, parched grain, cummin seed and āmba (some kind of grain) for (times of) urgent (need). One should not take (anything from the stored)".

Fleet has rendered it as follows:-

(1) savva-ti-yāna-mahāmaggānaṃ sāsane (1) Manavasitike

(2) Dasilimate usagāme va ete duve koṭṭhāgaṭani

(3) Tiyavani-Mathulā-camcu-Medama-bhālakānaṃ vālā.

(4) kayyiyamati atiyāyikāya (,) no gahitavvāya (1).

He translates it that "notice for all the three great roads for vehicles! At the junction (named) Manavasi of the three roads, in actually (the villages) Dasilimata

and Usagāma these two store-houses are prepared for the sheltering of loads of commodities of (i.e., from and to) Tiyanani, Mathulā and Camcu, to meet any case of urgent need, but not for permanent use.

Barua read the inscription as follows:-

- (1) Sāvatiyānaṃ Mahāma(thā)naṃ¹ Sāsane(;) Mānavā sitika-
- (2) ḍasilimate ussagame va ete duve koṭṭhāgālāni
- (3) tina-yavani maṃthulloca-chammā-dāma-bhālakān (i) va.
- (4) laṃ kayiyati atiyāyikāya (;) no gahi (ta)vvāya

He translates it "The order of the High Functionaries of Śrāvastī,² these two store-houses (which are situated, one) in Mananāsitikṛtsrīmanta (and the other) in Usagrāma, (the provisions of) fodder and wheat, (and) the loads of ladles, canopies, yoke-pins and ropes are used in (times of) urgent need; (these are) not to be taken away."

Bhandarkar says that the last line of the Sohgaure copper plate should have been read as atiyāyikāya no

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1. Mahāmaggānam.
 2. Adopting mahāmaggānam as the correct reading. Barua says, one must translate "The order concerning the persons carrying on traffic along the high roads leading to Śrāvastī."

gahitavaya, "nothing should be taken in excess (of plenty)". He interprets the word atiyāyika as in "excess" not as an "urgency" or "emergency". In the view of Bhandarkar the Su-atiyāyika of the Mahāsthān Inscription has the same purport as this word in the Sohgaura copper plate. He says "Our record (i.e., the Mahāsthān inscription) speaks of two atiyāyikas one of which is Su-atiyāyika. It is this atiyāyika which is probably understood at the end of the Sohgaura copper plate."¹

We are disinclined to accept the suggestion of Bhandarkar, which does not seem to be very sound. Sanskrit, Pāli and Prākṛit equivalents of the word atiyāyika occur respectively in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilīya², the Rathavinīta Sutta³ and Aśoka's Rock Edict VI.⁴ In all these instances they have the sense of emergency or any matter or occasion, involving urgency.

1. Bhandarkar, op.cit.p.89.
2. Arthaśāstra. 1.15.11: Ātyāyikike kār̥ye mantṛīno mantri-pariṣadam vāhūya brūyād.
3. Majjhima-Nikāya, 1.p.149: kin cid eva accāyikaṃ karaṇīyam (urgent work) upajjeyya.
4. R.E.VI: ācāyika āropiṭaṃ (g) atiyayike āropite (j).

We are equally disinclined to agree with Barua, who renders Su-atiyāyika as an emergency arising from the action of parrots. We wonder whether it would be possible in ancient times for parrots to cause so much injury to crops as to bring about a serious famine, especially as parrots are nowadays very rare in Bengal and are hardly to be seen.

We should like to interpret this Su-atiyāyika¹ as good emergency, one which may arise on auspicious or happy occasions, such as religious festivals which are very common throughout in India. India is a religious country; the people are usually religiously minded and they celebrate various religious festivals in order to gain merit which will bring peace and happiness in their next life. With these ideas in mind even at present, the people of Bengal and other parts of India celebrate numerous festivals and travel far from home and spend much of their savings for that purpose. Wealthy religious-minded persons used to open charitable

1. Su = Subbha or Maṅgala. i.e., auspicious or good, atiyāyika = occasion or urgency.

funds and to distribute money, corn, oil and cloth to the Brāhmaṇas and the needy. It may be suggested that the term Su-atiyāyika implies that the store-house might be opened and gifts of food made to the poor or to pilgrims on special festive occasions.

We know from the Epics and other sources that the kings and queens in those days would open the royal treasuries and granaries and distribute money, food and other things on such festive occasions. This idea is clearly reflected in the legend of the Great Giver named Dātā Karna, who did not hesitate to sacrifice his little son to a hungry Brāhmaṇa who expressed his desire to have young human beings' flesh and blood. So we think that it would not be unreasonable if we rendered this Su-atiyāyika in the light of this fact.

Jayaswal¹ remarks - "There is no doubt that the Mahāsthān inscription is a genuine Maurya record. In fine lettering it is engraved on a white red-stone, (sic) similar to many pieces discovered in the Pāṭaliputra excavation. Its importance consists in the fact that

1. The Modern Review, May, No. 1933. pp 508 ff.

it is the first secular administrative Maurya record; Aśoka inscriptions being all religious. In a store-house grain had been stored and probably cash also, which was ordered to be lent. It seems to have been a time of distress. The seat of government was at Puṇḍranagara and there seems to have been (Mahā)mātrās for the government of the Sa(ṁ) Vamgīyas. The record is a striking confirmation of the tradition of the Jaina literature that a prolonged famine visited North India for twelve years in the reign of Candragupta Maurya; which led to the migration of Jaina ascetics to the South. Lastly, the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya is confirmed by the Mahāsthān Inscription, Kauṭilya includes Vāṅga within the rules of his manual, which shows that Vāṅga was a part of the Maurya empire." Aśoka's mastery of Puṇḍravardhana is also mentioned in a legend of the Divyāvadāna, which describes how the Ajīvikas of this place incurred his wrath and suffered the consequences of the royal displeasure,¹ (Puṇḍravardhane sarve ajīvikāḥ praghātavyātavyāḥ). But we cannot say

1. Div.ed. by F.B.Cowell and R.A.Neil, 1886, p.427.

anything definitely ^{on} how far this legend is true.

While the connexion of this inscription with the famine mentioned in the Jaina tradition is indeed very doubtful, we believe that Jayaswal's well-worded conclusions about the Mahāsthān Inscription are substantially correct.

The Historical Interest of this inscription.

(a) This Mahāsthān Inscription proves that in ancient times the state tried to combat natural disasters, as it does nowadays. In this connexion Kauṭilya¹ reminds us that during a famine, the king may show favour by giving gratis seeds (bīja) and food (bhakta). "Either he (i.e., the beneficiary) may work in forts and on dams with the distribution of food, or he (the King) may distribute food gratis (without doing work)". This passage shows that in ancient times the state faced the ravages of famine either by starting works of public utility or by a free distribution of food. But neither of these seems to be referred to in the Mahāsthān Inscription.

1. Durbhikṣe rājā-bīja-bhakt-ōpagrahaṁ kṛtr = ānugrahaṁ kuryat. Durga-setu-karma vā bhakt-ānu-grahena bhakta-samvibhāgam vā, Arth. IV.3.20.R.P.Kangle.

It states on the contrary that the people of Bengal (Saṁvāṅgiya) shall be helped by money (gandaka) and grain (dhāniya) in times of emergency and the money and the paddy shall be returned also to the state treasury and the state granary as soon as the days of prosperity come back. It is worthwhile enquiring here why was money also given to the Saṁvāṅgiyas? In this connection we may agree with Bhandarkar. In Bengal, where nature is so powerful, floods occur quite often even nowadays, as a consequence of the inundation of a river. Mahāsthān was situated on the Karatoyā river. It is natural that when a town stands on a river, the floods should destroy not only the crops in the fields but also the buildings and huts on its banks. We suggest that in order to meet this adversity the state decided that the money should be given to the people whose shelters had been seriously damaged or destroyed by floods in order that they might rebuild them. Hence it seems that in ancient times the people of Bengal enjoyed good government.

(b) This important inscription clearly establishes the identification of ancient Puṇḍranagara or Puṇḍravardhananagara

with modern Mahāsthāngadh in Bogra district.

(c) The use of a form of Māgadhi, which was the court language of the Maurya period, suggests, as is also indicated by other sources, that North Bengal was included in the Maurya dominions.¹ It seems that the Māgadhi language was used for official purposes in Bengal in the third century B.C.

(d) The Puṇḍras are mentioned in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa² where they are known as dasyus. The Aitareya Aranyaka³ also refers to the Vaṅgas, another early tribe of Bengal, and describes them as people guilty of transgression. Though these tribes of Bengal are mentioned in the early Brāhmanical literature, this does not mean that Bengal was included within the circle of Aryan culture. As we have already seen, the Puṇḍras and the Vaṅgas were regarded as altogether outside the fringe of Vedic culture even in the Dharmasūtra period. It seems that Brāhmanism may have taken a long time to spread in Bengal. At least there is no definite evidence to show that it

1. Proc. ASB. 2nd Jan., 1933.

2. AB., VIII, 22, p. 337.

3. AA., p. 200, Keith.

prevailed in Bengal earlier than the Gupta period.

There is a probability that Bengal came into contact with the Āryān culture for the first time through the Jainas. This is ^{indicated} ~~proved~~ by the Jaina Kalpasūtra¹ attributed to Bhadrabāhu who was contemporaneous with Candragupta Maurya. Although this tradition is a matter of dispute, it seems that the work contains some old material. The Kalpasūtra² mentions three Śākhās (branches) of the Godāsa gaṇa of Jaina monks, named after three places in ancient Bengal, Tāmralipta (modern Tamluk), Koṭivarṣa (Dinājpur district) and Puṇḍravardhana. Inscriptions of the end of the first century B.C. and of the first century A.D.³ contain names of many of the schools mentioned in the Kalpasūtra, and thus show that the Jainism was well established in that period. A copper plate⁴ was discovered during the excavations at Pāhārpur which is dated G.E.159 = 477 A.D. and registers a grant for the worship of the Arhats at a Vihāra at

1. Wint.Lit.vol.II, p.462.

2. Guérinot, Epigraphia Jaina, pp. 36ff, 71ff.

3. EI., vol.XX, p.61ff.

4. Watters II, pp.184, 187. E.I xx, p.60

Vaṭagōhālī, which is situated not very far from Mahāsthān and 'was presided over by the disciples and the disciples of disciples of the Nirgranthanātha āchārya Guhanandin belonging to the Pañcā Stūpa section of Benares".

Hsüan Tsang also says that the Nirgrantha Jainas were numerous in Pundravardhana and Samatata. So there is little doubt that Jainism was widespread in Bengal till the seventh century A.D.

CHAPTER III

Bengal from the Fall of the Mauryas to the Rise of the Guptas

The history of Bengal from the fall of the Mauryas to the rise of the Guptas is completely obscure. After the death of Aśoka the Mauryan empire began to disintegrate. The fall of the great empire was followed by a period of chaos and confusion. ~~The great empire broke up.~~ Northern India was again divided into small states. "Disorder, chaos and confusion rule supreme, for there remains no real daṇḍadhara (wielder of daṇḍa) for controlling the independent states and saving the whole country from the evils and perils of distemper" (sic).¹ Brhadratha, the last member of the dynasty, was overthrown by Puṣyamitra Śunga in c. 187 B.C.² During the time of Puṣyamitra Śunga India was invaded by the Greeks. This is referred to the Gārgī Saṁhitā and the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali.³ W.W. Tarn⁴ has

1. H.N.E.I., p. 2.

2. P.H.A.I., (4th ed.) p. 320; E.H.I., (4th ed.) p. 208, places the coup d'état in 185 B.C.

3. P.H.A.I., 6th ed. p. 366.

4. The Greeks in Bactria and India. p. 146, 1951.

shown that the Greek invader was Demetrius, not Menander as believed by Smith.¹ However, Demetrius' raids into the Madhyadeśa were finally repulsed by Vasumitra, the grandson of Puṣyamitra. Demetrius had to hurry back owing to troubles in his own kingdom. Puṣyamitra celebrated his success by the performance of at least two horse-sacrifices. The Śuṅga dominion included most of Madhyadeśa and part of Malwa. During this Śuṅga period very little is known about the political history of Bengal. Bengal has yielded no epigraphic evidence of this period which would enable us to reconstruct its political history. It is not even known whether Bengal was included in the Śuṅga dominions.

The discovery of some beautiful terracotta figurines at Mahāsthāngaḍh, Tāmralipti and Chandraketugadh (24 Parganas District), datable in the second and first centuries B.C., proves that Bengal continued to flourish even after the fall of the Mauryas. The site of Silua in Noakhali district has produced fragments of a colossal image, the pedestal of which once bore an inscription assigned to the second century B.C. by paleographers. Unfortunately the

1. E.H.I., p. 210 (4th edn.) 1924, p. 210

inscription has been erased by "miscreants", and we have no evidence of its character, neither can we confirm that it was as ancient as it was said to be.¹

The excavations at Candra~~K~~etugarh² and Tamruk³ have thrown some light on the cultural, social and economic condition of Bengal during the Maurya, Sunga and Kuṣāṇa periods. At Khannamihiner-dhipi, a massive structure was excavated; no cult object was found to connect the colossal building that it represented with any particular denomination.⁴ On the basis of the finds, according to the archaeologists, the occupation of the area may be divided into seven periods.⁵ The period I may be assigned to the Maurya age; tiles, bamboos and wooden posts were used for building houses on mud-plinths. Chalcedony beads and small and large-sized pots were in use for domestic purposes. The Period II produced the Northern Black Polished Ware, black-and-red ware, beads of stone etc. The building materials seems to have remained the same. Period III may be synchronized with the Sunga period. This age was re-

1. A.S.I. A.R., 1930-34 Pt. I pp. 38-39.

2. A.S.I. A.R., 1959-60, pp. 50 ff;

3. A.S.I. A.R., 1954-55, pp. 19-20.

4. Ibid. (1959-60) p.50.

5. Ibid. p. 51.

markable for the use of cast copper+coins, beads awls and cosmetic sticks of bone and ivory, beads of carnelian and other stones, dice of bone, steatite caskets¹ (and various types of pottery, including a dish with a rounded base and externally-grooved rim. The building material does not seem to have altered from that of the earlier Periods.

Period IV, may according to the archaeologists within the Śuṅga-Kuṣāṇa age. This Period also produce the same materials as mentioned above, and in addition dice of bone, shell bangles, a terracotta plaque containing a pair of parrots pecking a lotus-pod, and rouletted ware.² Period V and Period VI belong to the Gupta and the late Gupta age respectively. The Period V yielded terracotta plaques containing animal and erotic human figures, terracotta ear-studs, and grey and black pottery with stamped designs.³ Period VI produced awls and gaming dice of bone, beads, pottery lamps etc. The layers of Period VII, post-Gupta in date, were extremely disturbed.⁴

A few indications of the condition of Bengal in the

1. A.S.I. A.R., 1959-60, p. 51. Plate LIV.

2. Ibid., Plate LV A.

3. Ibid., Plate LIV.

4. Ibid.

early centuries A.D. are afforded by the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, the Geography of Ptolemy, the Milinda-Pañho and the Nāgārjuna-Koṇḍa inscriptions. An important town in the country of the Gangaridae in the first and second centuries A.D. was Gange or Ganges, as it has been mentioned by both the author of the Periplus¹ and Ptolemy.² In the Periplus it is stated that a great volume of trade used to pass through the market-town of Gange, situated on the bank of the Ganges. It bears the testimony to the fact that as early as the first century A.D. "raw silk, silk yarn and silk cloth" came into Bengal from China (called Thinae in the text) and were re-exported to the Tamil country in the South (Damirica).³ It appears from the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea that there was a land-route which seems to have extended from Bengal to China through the hills of Assam or Manipur and Upper Burma.⁴ Various articles of trade including pearls and "muslins" of the finest sort" were brought to Gange, whence they were sent to various places.⁵ Ptolemy mentions the country of the

1. Periplus, pp. 47-48.

2. Ptolemy, translated by Mc.Crindle, p. 172, 1885.

3. Periplus, p. 48.

4. H.B., I. p. 662.

5. Periplus, pp. 47, 256.

Gangarides and their capital Gange as a port of considerable importance.

It appears from the accounts of the Periplus and Ptolemy that in the first two centuries of the Christian era the whole of deltaic Bengal was organised into a powerful kingdom with its capital at Gange, a great market town on the banks of the Ganges. This city of Gange is located by Ptolemy considerably to the South-east of "T(h)amalities" or Tāmralipti. Therefore we can place this market town somewhere near Tāmralipti which was also a great port at that time. But for its exact location we have to wait for future evidence.

It is quite possible that the country of the Gangarides cast off the Magadhan supremacy during the rule of the weak successors of Aśoka or after the break up of the Maurya empire in the second century B.C. It would also appear from the description of Ptolemy that independence was maintained at least down to the second century A.D.¹

The Milinda-Pañho² mentions Vaṅga in a list of maritime

1. E.H.B.P., p. 6.

2. Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names, II. 802; S.B.E., XXXVI. II. 269 (Text 359) Cf. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. 181. "Voyages to Vanga to Takkola, Cina, Savira, Suratt̥ha, Alasanda, Kolapaṭṭana, Suvannabhūmi, or some other port where shipping congregates."

countries where ships congregated for the purposes of trade. In the Nāgārjunakonda inscriptions there is a reference to Vaṅga in connection with the missionary activities of the masters and fraternities of monks of Ceylon.¹

The history of Bengal's foreign trade may be traced back to at least the first or second century A.D. Strabo (first century B.C.) refers to the "ascent of vessels from the sea by the Ganges to Palibothra" (Pāṭaliputra).² A number of Jātaka stories mention merchants and businessmen taking ship at Banares,³ or lower down at Cāmpā (modern Bhāgalpur),⁴ and then either coasting to Ceylon or adventuring many days without sight of land to Suvarṇabhūmi.⁵ The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea⁶ proves that Bengal maintained a brisk foreign trade with South India and Ceylon in the first century A.D. The articles of trade exported are said to have consisted of malabathrum, Gangetic spikenard, pearls and muslins of the finest sorts. They were exported from

1. E.I., XX, pp. 22 ff. 1933.

2. Mc.Crindle, Ancient India, 1901, p. 16.

3. Cf. Samudda-Vaṇija-Jātaka and San̥kha Jātaka (Jātaka, IV. 159, No. 466; 15-17; No. 422).

4. Mahājanaka Jātaka (Jātaka, VI. 34. No. 539).

5. E.I., XX, pp. 22 ff; R.C. Majumdar, "Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East ... Vol. I. Cāmpā", p. xi.

6. Periplus, p. 47.

the market Gange, ^{the merchants} carrying their goods in vessels described in the Periplus as Colandia.¹ The Milinda-Pañho,² composed about the first century A.D., mentions Vaṅga together with China, Takkola and other countries overseas. The history of textile manufacture in Bengal goes back to early times. According to the Arthasāstra,³ Bengal was famous for fine muslin. Four varieties of textile produced in Bengal are mentioned, viz. Kṣauma, dukūla, patroṇa and kārpāsika.

"Kṣauma was linen, being mixed with cotton. Its chief centres of manufacture were Pundravardhana (North Bengal) and Banares. A pure and finer form of linen was called dukūla. Patroṇa appears to have been wild silk. Kārpāsika obviously meant cotton fabrics."⁴

We know much less about the internal trade of ancient Bengal than about her foreign trade. But the early development of a considerable foreign trade presupposes the existence of a certain amount of inland commerce. The chief routes of internal trade were probably the waterways of the province. This suggests that in ancient times Bengal was politically

1. Periplus, p. 47.

2. Milinda-Pañho, 359; trans. II. 269 (S.B.E. XXXVI).

3. Arthasāstra, Bk. II. Ch. 11 (trans. by R. Shamasastry. (3rd edn.) Mysore, 1929.

4. H.B., I. p. 655.

and socially well organised and that at least some of the people of Bengal in those days were highly civilised. Otherwise this internal and external trade system would not be possible.

Tāmrālipti¹ was a great emporium and a seat of learning in ancient times. Coins, terracottas and pottery of unusual shape have been discovered at this site. All the evidence shows that this town had been in occupation from neolithic to modern times with occasional breaks. A few pottery remains suggest that there was a small settlement here in very early times.² The cultural equipment of the third and the second century B.C. included beautiful and typical terracotta figurines of the Sunga period, cast copper coins and pottery bearing close affinity to that of contemporary northern India.

In the first and the second centuries A.D. Tāmrālipti seems to have shared with other ports on the Indian coasts trade contacts with the Roman world, as follows from a sprinkler and the rouletted ware which are believed to have

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1. A.S.I. A.R., 1954-55, p. 19-20; Tāmrālipti, the famous ancient sea-port of Bengal, now called Tamruk (Midnapur Dist). Cf. Classical Accounts Ptolemy, p. 381, note. 73.
 2. A.S.I. A.R., 1954-55, p. 19-20.

originated from Rome.¹ A brick-built stepped tank and ring-well of this period have also been exposed.²

Kuṣāṇa coins have been discovered in several places in Bengal. In 1882 a copper coin of Kanīṣka was found at Tamluk.³ In 1890 a base metal coin of Vāsudeva was found in the Murshidabad district.⁴ In 1909 a gold coin of the same king was found in the Bogra district.⁵

It is debatable whether these finds indicate any suzerainty of the Kuṣāṇa kings over Bengal. In general gold and silver coins could be carried to distant lands without any implication of political occupation. In the absence of any corroborative evidence, it is doubtful whether Bengal or any part of it ever formed a province of the Kuṣāṇa empire.

In the second century A.D. Ptolemy refers to a people called Mandaloi who ruled over the Pāṭaliputra and Tāmralipta areas.⁶ In Ptolemy's time upper Bengal was part of an extensive territory, including the district of Gorakhpur

1. A.S.I. A.R., 1954-1955. pp. 19-20.

2. Ibid.

3. Proc. A.S.B., 1882, p. 113.

4. Ibid., 1890, p. 162.

5. R. Chandra, Gaudarājamālā, p. 4.

6. McCrindle, Ptolemy, 1927, pp. 132-33, 167-68, 212-14; 379-80.

under the power of the Moroundai.¹ The Muruṇḍas are known from different sources. Allan² says that they were of foreign origin and had a powerful kingdom in the greater part of the Gangetic valley in the early centuries of the Christian era. Sten Konow³ says that these Muruṇḍas "were in reality the Kuṣāṇas and the word Muruṇḍa itself is not the name of a tribe but a Śaka word meaning 'lord' which was used as a title by the Śakas and after them by the Kuṣāṇas." According to Hemacandra's⁴ testimony the Muruṇḍas were at one time connected with Lamghan (Lampākas - tu⁵ Muruṇḍāḥ).

All available information on the Muruṇḍas has been collected by Sylvain Lévi⁶ who points out their association with the Śakas in the compound Śaka-Muruṇḍa in the Allāhābād pillar inscription and suggests that they were a Scythian or Kuṣāṇa people.⁷ He recognizes the name in the Chinese Meou-

1. Ibid.

2. Allan, C.C.G.D.B.M., p. xxix.

3. E.I., XIV. pp. 292-3; C.I.I., Vol. II. p. 143, 145.

4. Abhidhānacintāmaṇi, V. 36, p. 144.

5. Cunningham, Ancient Geography of India; pp. 49-50, 674.

6. 'Deux Peuples méconnus' in Mélanges Charles de Harlez (Leiden, 1896), pp. 176-85.

7. This was first recognized by Wilford (Asiatic Researches, VIII, p. 113.) who calls the Muruṇḍas 'a tribe of Huns', and identifies them with the Marundae of Ptolemy.

loun, the title of the king of a country in India, in an account of a Chinese embassy to Fu-Nan, ^{modern Cambodia} (Siam) in the third century A.D. The Chinese envoy there met envoys who had just returned from India, whither they had been sent by the king of Fu-nan, and received an account of India from them. Lévi identifies the word Meo-loun (Murunḍa) with the Marundae of Ptolemy, who locates them on the left bank of the Ganges, South of the Gogra, down to the top of the delta. But it would not be possible to trace their extension of power so far east and south as the delta of the Ganges on the authority of Ptolemy, whose geographical knowledge was often defective.¹ According to Lévi the Greek and Chinese accounts are in substantial agreement with Jaina texts which mention a Maruṇḍarāja as ruler of Kānyakubja² and as residing in Pāṭaliputra.³ The Chinese authority describes the Muruṇḍarāja as a monarch of great power whose authority was acknowledged by distant kingdoms, and the description of his capital seems to suggest Pāṭaliputra.⁴ The name Maruṇḍa or Muruṇḍa, is found in the dynastic

1. Monahan, The Early History of Bengal pp. 8-13.

2. Sinhāsanadvātrīṃśikā, ed. Weber, in Indische Studien, Vol. XV, pp. 279-80.

3. Merutunga's Prabandhacintāmaṇī, Bombay, 1888, p. 27.

4. C.C.G.D.B.M., p. xxix.

lists of the Purāṇas,¹ among the races of foreign origin which have ruled India with the Śakas, Yavanas and Tukhāras. The Matsya Purāṇa describes them as of foreign origin (Mlecchasambhava).² The Purāṇas state that the Muruṇḍas will rule over large tracts of the Ganges valley.³

The compound Daivaputra-Sāhi-Sāhānuṣāhi-Saka-Muruṇḍaiḥ occurs in the Allāhābād Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta. The first three members of the compound were the titles and not ethnic terms like the last two (Saka-Muruṇḍa). They were the titles of the great Kuṣāṇa emperors Kaṇiṣka, Huviṣka and Vāsudeva.

Allan thinks that "it was the decline of Muruṇḍa power that gave the Gupta dynasty its opportunity for expansion."⁴ Allan accepts Lassen's identification of "the Muruṇḍas as the people of Lampāka, a small country lying along the northern bank of the Kābul River, between the Aliyal and Kumar Rivers; but this may have been the last stronghold of the Tukhāra power that once ruled all Northern India from Kābul to the Ganges."⁵

1. Pargiter; P.T.D.K.A., pp. 46-47.

2. Ibid., p. 47.

3. Dacca University Studies, I, No. 2, p.47.

4. C.C.G.D.B.M., p. xxx.

5. Allan op.cit., p. xxx, referring to Lassen Indische Altertumskunde, I, p. 548; cf. Smith J.R.A.S. 1897, pp. 984-6.

According to D.C. Sircar¹ "Devaputra is the title of the Kuṣāṇa chiefs and Śāhānuṣāhi their emperor, but the passage Devaputra Śāhi-Śāhanuṣāhi appears to indicate the Kuṣāṇa emperor." He also thinks that "Murunda may be a Skythic tribe or Saka Murunda may be the Saka lords."

In the fifth century A.D. we ^{may infer} ~~come to~~ know from an Uccha-Kalpa inscription² in Central India that Mahārāja Jayanātha had a Murunda wife. In ^{one} plate No. 28 ^(Fleet) she is called Murundadevī and in ^{another (Fleet)} ~~the~~ plate No. 31 she is known as Murundasvāminī, the mother of Sarvanātha. But this must be something in the way of proper name and the inscriptions do not necessarily indicate her direct ethnic origin.

P.L. Paul³ suggested that the Saka Murundas of the Allāhābād Pillar Inscription should be taken to mean two separate peoples and not Saka lords. Thus the Murundas seem to be a foreign horde like the Sakas, who invaded India in the early centuries of the Christian era. But it is strange that not a single coin has been found which can be ascribed to this people.

1. S.I., p. 258 f.n.

2. C.I.I., III. pp. 127, 131, 136.

3. E.H.B., p. 6. 1939.

According to Cunningham,¹ the name of the Marundai is still preserved in the country of the Muṇḍās, a hill-tribe scattered over Chota-Nagpur and Central India. But we do not have any solid evidence^{to show} whether the Muṇḍas of Chota Nagpur were ethnically connected with the Muruṇḍas.

B.C. Sen² suggests that the Muruṇḍas may have originally been viceroys under Kuṣāṇa emperors and seem to have been taken the opportunity to set up an independent principality with the fall of their lords. This may be possible, but we do not have any positive evidence that Bengal was included in the Kuṣāṇa empire. We cannot say definitely whether the Muruṇḍas ruled in Bengal proper, because we do not possess any archaeological evidence of them. They may have ruled in some parts of Bengal near the border of Bihar before the rise of the Guptas.

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1. Ancient Geography of India, Majumdar's Ed., pp. 581 ff.
 2. H.A.B.I., p. 198.

CHAPTER IV

Bengal under the Guptas

As we have seen, little is known about the history of Bengal from the downfall of the Mauryas to the rise of the Guptas.

We learn from the Gupta inscriptions that Candragupta I, the son and successor of Ghatotkaca Gupta, was the real founder of the great Gupta empire. He made a matrimonial alliance with the Licchavis, who were very powerful at that time, and this alliance helped him to rise to the imperial position. He took the imperial title Mahārājādhirāja, which proves that he was a more powerful king than his ancestors who had only the title Mahārāja; moreover he issued gold coins. We learn from the Purāṇas¹ that his authority was confined to the territories along the Ganges, Prayāga (Allāhābād), Sāketa (Oudh) and Magadha. During his reign whether Bengal was included within the Gupta empire is not known. Therefore it is possible to assume that Bengal remained divided into independent states till the conquest of

1. PTOKA., Intro. XII, p. 53.

Samudra Gupta.

From the Allāhābād Pillar Inscription¹ of Samudra Gupta it is clear that he was chosen by his father, Candragupta I to succeed him. He was a great conqueror, and V.A.Smith refers to him as 'the Indian Napoleon'. It was his aim to bring about the political unification of India and make himself a sole ruler (Ekarāṭ+). He brought under his control the entire Gangetic plain together with certain districts in Central and Eastern India. It is stated in his famous ~~Iron~~ Pillar Inscription that he uprooted Rudradeva, Matila, Nāgadatta, Candravarman, Gaṇapati Nāga, Nāgasena, Acyuta, Nandi, Balavarman and many other kings of Āryāvarta. Two of them, Nāgasena and Gaṇapati Nāga, were rulers of the Nāga family.² Gaṇapati Nāga is known from coins found at Mathurā,³ at Pawāyā near Narwar and at Besnagar.⁴ These Nāga rulers

1. CII., III, No. 1. p. 7f.

2. For the identifications of kings and states mentioned in the Allāhābād Inscription cf. Smith's EHI, pp. 269ff; PHAI, pp. 534ff; Classical Age, pp. 8ff.

3. Altekar, New History of Indian People, VI, p. 37.

4. IHQ., I, 2, 255.

had set up three kingdoms at Padmāvatī (in old Gwalior State), Vidiśā (Bhilsa) and Mathurā.¹ Acyuta ruled in Ahicchatrā (near Bareilly).² Nandin, according to Raychaudhuri, was also a Nāga prince.³ The identification of Candravarman is a matter of dispute which will be discussed later. The dominion of the remaining king - Rudradeva, is a matter of controversy. Dr.D.C. Sircar⁴ has suggested that Rudradeva might be identified with the Western Satrap Rudrādāman II or his son Rudrasena III. On the other hand, Rudradeva has been identified by Mr.Dikshit with Rudrasena Vākāṭaka.⁵ But the Vākāṭakas can hardly be regarded as rulers of Aryāvarta.⁶ The kingdoms of the other two kings cannot be located at present.

Samudra Gupta's campaigns of conquest were not confined to North India, and ^{he} led a campaign to the Deccan. The defeated chiefs included Mahendra of Kosala (Drug, Raipur, Bilāspur and Sambalpur Districts), Vyāghrarāja of

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1. Classical Age, p.8.
 2. Ibid.
 3. PHAI., p.535.
 4. PIHC, VII, 78.
 5. PHAI., p.534.
 6. Ibid.

Mahākāntāra (probably forest regions in Jeypore State Orissa), Mahendragiri of Piṣṭapura (Pithāpuram in the Godāvari District), Hastivarman (the Śālāṅkāyana chief) of Veṅgī (modern Peddāvegi, 7 miles north of Ellore between the Kṛṣṇā and Gōdāvarī), Ugrasena of Pālakka (Nellore District), and Viṣṇugopa (the Pallava king) of Kāñcī (Conjeevaram in Chingleput District). Kings Damana of Eraṇḍapalla and Kuvera of Devarāṣṭra probably ruled in the Vizagapatam District. Fleet¹ identified Eraṇḍapalla and Devarāṣṭra respectively with Erandol (in Khāndesh) and Mahārāṣṭra and held that Samudra Gupta passed through the Western Deccan after his victorious campaign in the eastern coast. This view was generally accepted until Dubreuil² proposed to locate Eraṇḍapalla in the Ganjām and Devarāṣṭra in the Vizagapatam District. Dubreuil's identification is now generally accepted and the view that Samudra Gupta proceeded to the ^{Maharashtra} Bombay State is discredited. It appears that Samudra Gupta led his southern campaign after over-running the North Eastern part of India - Samatāṭa, Davāka,

1. Fleet in JRAS., 1898, pp. 369f.

2. Ancient History of the Deccan, pp. 58, 160.

Kāmarūpa and Nepāla. Probably he took the shorter and more convenient route from Bengal to Ganjām through the district of Midnāpure and Balāsore.

In the Pillār Inscription we find that Samudra Gupta's pratyanta ('frontier') kingdoms in the east were Samataṭa, Ḍavāka and Kāmarūpa. It thus appears that the existence of most independent states in Bengal had come to an end by about the middle of the fourth century A.D. But Samataṭa, as a separate kingdom, a pratyanta country in the east, like the other eastern kingdoms, Ḍavāka, Kāmarūpa Nepāla etc., paid tribute to the Gupta monarch, Samudra Gupta,¹ but enjoyed full autonomy in respect of internal administration. Samataṭa was in east Bengal, and has been identified with Tipperā and Noakhali Districts.² The location of Ḍavāka is a matter of controversy, but it has been identified by N.K.Bhattachali³ with the modern Ḍabokā in Naogong district, Assam, which identification is now generally accepted; and Kāmarūpa is the Gauhati region of Assam.

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1. Fleet, CII., III, p. 6ff; SI., pp. 257ff.
 2. JARS., I, 1933, pp. 14-15.
 3. EI., XXVII, pp. 18ff.

Whether the conquest of Bengal took place during the reign of Samudra Gupta or was completed wholly or partly by his son is also a matter of dispute. The Mehrauli ~~Iron~~ Pillar inscription mentions a king called Candra who in his conquests "extirpated in battle in the Vaṅga countries his enemies who offered him a united resistance".¹ The identification of Candra is still controversial. In the absence of full details about this king his identity is a matter of great uncertainty. He has been identified, for example, with Candra Gupta I, king Candravarman of Puṣkaraṇa, Candrāṁsa of Nāga lineage and Candra Gupta II.

Fleet² identified this king Candra with Candra Gupta I of the Gupta dynasty, R.G.Basak and S.K.Aiyangar broadly agreed with him. But in some respects Basak disagreed with Fleet.³ The objection against the identification with Candra Gupta I is that the latter was not powerful enough to have launched campaigns against Bengal, Punjab or the South. It is stated in the Purāṇas⁴ that

1. Fleet op.cit., p.141; SI., p.275ff.

2. CII., III, p.240, n.1.

3. IA., vol.XLVIII, p.101.

4. P.T.D.K.A. Intro. XII, p.53.

before Samudra Gupta, Gupta authority was limited to the territories along the Ganges, Prayāga, Sāketa and Magadha (Anu-Gaṅgā-Prayāgaṁca Sāketam Magadhāms tathā). The Meherauli inscription states also that King Candra ruled for a long time (Sucirañ ca 1.5). We agree with those who believe that Candra Gupta I had a short reign.¹ Candra's identification with Candra Gupta I is also rendered uncertain, as the latter is not known to have been a devotee of Viṣṇu. In the genealogical portion of the early Gupta records, devotion to Viṣṇu is ascribed only to Candra Gupta II and his successors. These are strong objections against identifying Candra of the Meherauli Pillar with Candra Gupta I.

H.P.Sastri,² on the other hand, identified king Candra with king Candravarman of Puṣkaraṇa. Sastri's view was accepted by V.A.Smith,³ and R.D.Banerjee.⁴ In this case, we wonder also how it would be possible for a petty local ruler^{of Bengal} to cross the seven mouths of the Indus and defeat the Vāhlīkas. According to the Meherauli

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1. E.G., R.D.Banerji, EI., XIV, p.368.
 2. EP.Ind. vol. XII, pp.315ff; XIII, p.133; IA., 1913, pp.217ff.
 3. EHI (4th ed), p.307, fn.1.
 4. EP.Ind. XIV, p.367ff.

inscription King Candra extended his power as far as the Southern Ocean (Jalanidhir...ddak¹sinah, 1.2). Thus we do not have any sound evidence which will lead us to identify Candravarman of the Susuniā inscription with Candra of the Meherauli inscription. So the theory of H.P.Sastri is hardly tenable, because the Susuniā inscription gives no reference to any expedition by this King of Bengal.

H.C.Raychaudhuri¹ suggested that Candra of the Meherauli inscription belonged to a Nāga line. His theory is based on the accounts of the Purāṇas. He says that according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa² Nāga dynasties ruled at Padmāvati and Mathurā. He states further that two kings named Sadā Candra and Candrāmsa are mentioned among the post-Andhran kings of Nāga lineage³ and he suggests that Candrāmsa may have been the Candra of the Meherauli inscription. Like the identification of Candra with Candra Gupta I and Candragarman, his identification with the Nāga Candrāmsa is also improbable, and his the

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1. PHAI., p. ⁵³⁵55ff.
 2. PT.DKA., p. 53.
 3. PHAI., p. 535, fn. 1.

identification with Candragupta Maurya is absurd.

In our opinion king Candra should be identified with Candra Gupta II. It seems that Hoernle¹ is perfectly right in assigning this record palaeographically to the fifth century A.D. The inscription refers to "the four boundaries of the territory conquered by the king in course of his digvijaya. The eastern limit was Vāṅga, the Southern limit was the Southern Sea (i.e., Indian Ocean); the Western limit was the seven mouths of the Indus (falling into the Western Ocean or Arabian Sea) and the northern limit was Vāhlikā".²

Candra Gupta II is sometimes called Candra and Narendra Candra on his coins;³ he is known to have set out for the conquest of "the whole earth"; he was a worshipper of Viṣṇu; and he enjoyed a long reign.⁴ It seems that ^{the} exploits attributed to the King of the Meherauli Pillar could be applicable only to the King Candra Gupta II.

As far as we know the greatest military achievement of Candra Gupta II was his permanent conquest of Malwa,

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1. D.C.Sircar also accepted this date. SI.,p.275,fn.3.
 2. JASB.,vol.5,1939,p.412ff; SI.,p.275ff.fn.4,p.276.
 3. CCGDBM.,p.XXXVII.
 4. SI.,p.275ff.,fn.2.

Gujarat and Kathiawar, which had been dominated for centuries by the Śaka dynasty.¹ According to the pillar inscription Candrar's supremacy extended to the Southern sea. There is, however not the slightest evidence suggesting that Candrar Gupta II ever led an army against the South. The campaigns in Bengal and west of the Indus are known only from the ^{General Inscription} Iron Pillar. It seems that they may have occurred in the latter part of his reign, because the record appears to be post-humous. Allan² remarks that 'the enemies who had united against him (King Candrar) in the Vāṅga country were probably peoples who had taken the opportunity of his absence in the west to cast off the yoke under which his father had laid them', is applicable to Candrar Gupta II. Some scholars think that during the reign of Rāma Gupta the great empire established by Samudra Gupta almost disintegrated, but it appears from the epigraphic, literary and numismatic evidence of his reign that Candrar Gupta II not only consolidated his father's conquests but even

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1. R.C.Majumdar and A.S.Altakar, Vākātaka Gupta p.154.
 2. CCGDBM., p.XXXVI. It is to be noted that Allan rejected the identification with Candrar Gupta II.

enlarged them by the conquest of the Śaka kingdom.

Dr. D. C. Sircar¹ thinks that the claim of King Candragupta II may be a conventional one, like that of later kings such as Yaśodharman of Mālwa, who boasts of conquering the whole country to the west of Lauhitya, to the south of the Tuhina-Śikharin, to the east of the Paścima-payodhi and to the north of the Mahendra (probably Mahendrācala in the Tinnevely District). Sircar says that 'it is a Praśasti which may have germs of truth, but may not be entirely historical.'

1. SI., p. 276, fn. 4.

There is much to be said for Professor Sircar's judgment in this matter, but it must be remembered that Candragupta II's power was far greater than that of Yaśodharman, and other later rulers who made similar claims. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that he fought both in Bengal and on the Indus, though for want of more positive evidence we cannot accept the claims of the Meherauli Inscription as certain proof of this.

R.C. Majumdar¹ believes that "with the exception of Samatata the rest of Bengal was definitely incorporated in the Gupta empire by the time of Samudra Gupta". We cannot accept this forceful statement owing to the lack of positive evidence.

The king of Samatata was perhaps forced to part with most of his powers and allowed to rule over a very limited dominion as a vassal of the emperor.² Retaining only the control of internal administration, he had to pay various kinds of taxes (sarva-kara-dāna) to Samudra Gupta, attend his durbars (gamana), render obeisance to

1. HB., I, p. 47.

2. B.C. Sen, op. cit., pp. 208ff.

him (prapāma) and carry out all his domineering commands (paritoṣita-pracanda-śāsanasya).¹ In short, he was a dependent ally of the emperor and was bound to support him in war and peace. Samatata is the only territory mentioned as subordinate to Samudra Gupta that can be located with certainty in Bengal.

Samudra Gupta was succeeded by his son Candra Gupta II who ruled from c.A.D. 375 to 413. He liberated Malwa and Saurāṣṭra² from the yoke of the Śakas, and he succeeded in annexing it to his empire after having overthrown his Śaka contemporary Rudrasimha III c.A.D. 395. No inscriptions of Candra Gupta II have been found in Bengal, but the Kālighāt hoard and Hughli hoard contained some coins of Candra Gupta II. Candra Gupta's silver coins have a political history behind them. As they are closely connected with the coinage of the Kṣatrapa rulers of the west, it is believed that they were introduced after his conquest of their territories.³ Regarding the silver coin of Candra Gupta II,

1. CII., III, p. 8.

2. CII., III, No. 6, p. 35; Vākātaka Gupta Age, p. 153f.

3. CCGDBM., pp. lxxxvi-vii.

found at Sūltanganj opposite the Jākugira rock in the Bhāgalpur district along with a coin of the last Kṣatrapa ruler Svāmi Rudrasīmha, the opinion of Allan is that they could have been hardly meant for use in the locality of their find spot.¹

Candra Gupta II was the most illustrious member of the Gupta dynasty. He performed a horse sacrifice and assumed the title of Vikramāditya. Fa-hsien, who visited India during this period, speaks highly of the benevolent administration and general prosperity prevalent in the kingdom. Tradition credits him with being the patron of nine 'jewels', including Kālidāsa. The last known date of Candra Gupta II is the year 93 G.E. (c.A.D.412)² and the earliest date of his son Kumāra Gupta II is the year 96 G.E.³ (c.A.D.415). Therefore his reign must have come to an end between these two years.

Candra Gupta II was succeeded by his son Kumāra Gupta I. Like his father he also performed a horse-

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1. CCGDBM., p.cxxx; CASR., vol.X, p.127.
 2. CII., III, No.5, p.32f.
 3. Ibid., No.10, p.49f.

sacrifice, and ^{he} assumed the title of Mahendrāditya.

He maintained the peace and prosperity of the empire, as is abundantly attested by the existence of a large number of varieties of gold and silver coins. The largest number of Gupta coins so far discovered from Bengal is claimed by Kumāra Gupta I. The find from Muhammadpur brought to light several specimens of the silver currency of Kumāra Gupta I, whose gold coins have been collected from various parts of Bengal. Out of the thirteen gold coins from ^{Hugli} Hooghly¹ as many as seven belong to him, of which one represents him as a lion-slayer (obv., the king combating with a lion, rev., *Simhavāhinī*), and three each are of the Horseman (obv., the king on horse-back, rev., Goddess feeding a peacock), and the Archer type. Two specimens, one of the second and the other of the third variety mentioned above, were found from Tamluk (in the Midnapore District)² and Mahanada³ (in the ^{Hugli} Hooghly District) respectively. His inscriptions have been

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1. JASB., 1884, p.152; Altekar, The coinage of the Gupta Empire, p.307.
 2. Proc.ASB., 1882, p.112.
 3. JRAS., 1893, pp.116-17.

found in Northern Bengal. Four copper plate inscriptions are to be ascribed to the reign of Kumāra Gupta I (A.D. 415-455) of which two were discovered from Dāmodarpur¹ (in the Dinajpur district), the third from Dhanaidaha (in the Rājshāhi district)² and the fourth from Baigrām,³ which is situated near Hili in North Bengal. This Baigrām copper plate inscription does not mention the name of the ruler during whose reign it was issued. But the script of the record is similar to that of the Dāmodarpur and other grants of the Gupta period. Moreover the date of the Baigrām copper plate is 128 G.E. which falls within the reign of Kumāra Gupta I. The Dhanāidaha inscription is the earliest record of Kumāra Gupta I, dated 113 G.E.— 432-33 A.D.

In the Dāmodarpur inscriptions Northern Bengal appears as an integral part of the empire under the name of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. The appointment of an uparika (Governor of a province) was approved by the emperor himself (taḍpāda-parigrhīte). During the reign of

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1. EP. Ind. XV, pp. 113ff; Select inscription, pp. 283-287, 1942.
 2. EI., XVII, p. 345ff; SI., pp. 280-282; JASB., NS., vol. V, p. 457ff.
 3. EI., XXI, pt. II, p. 78ff. SI., No. 41, pp. 342-345.

Kumāra Gupta I the uparika Cirātadatta was governor of the bhukti; he held his office at least for a term of four years (124-128 G.E. = A.D. 443-447). The Governor in his turn appointed Kumārāmātya Vetravarman to administer the viṣaya of Koṭivarṣa (in the Dinajpur District) from the adhiṣṭhāna (headquarters).

Possibly Puṇḍravardhana Bhukti was the North-eastern limit of the directly governed part of the Gupta Empire, since we have no evidence of the existence of other bhuktis beyond it. Bengal thus definitely came within the boundaries of the empire, but Kāmarūpa (Assam) and Samatata remained ~~an~~ outlying provinces ruled by pratyanta nṛpatis, as is known from the Allāhābād Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta, who were to a certain extent subordinate to the Gupta Sovereigns.¹ In this connexion it should be remembered that there is no information concerning his relations with the rest of Bengal, specially its western portion, which, according to Dr. B.C. Sen,² was incorporated into the empire during the time of Samudra Gupta. Though we do not have any positive

1. Basak, HNEI, p. 52.

2. B.C. Sen, Hist. Aspects of Beng. Insp. p. 212.

evidence to prove this, it seems very probable for the Gupta monarch could not push his frontier to the lower region of Bengal (Samatāṭa) without conquering this part.

According to R.G.Basak,¹ on the other hand, the province of Puṇḍravardhana formed part of the Magadhan empire from the time of the early Guptas and it was under their direct jurisdiction, as this area is not mentioned in the list of countries conquered by Samudra Gupta. It is, however, difficult to agree with Basak because we do not possess any evidence which will prove that Puṇḍravardhana was included within the Gupta empire before Samudra Gupta. We cannot be certain that the list of Samudra Gupta's conquests is exhaustive, and thus it is possible that Puṇḍravardhana was conquered by him in the course of his campaign against Samatāṭa.

The Dāmodarpur copper plates (Nos.1 and 2) show that Kumāra Gupta I enjoyed high sounding titles such as 'Lord of earth', Parama-daivata (supreme devotee of the Gods) Parama-bhaṭṭāraka (the Supreme lord), and mahā-rājādhirāja ^{Great} (king of kings). This suggests that there

1. EI., XV, p.116; HNEI, p.51.

was no reduction of his power, at least in the eastern part of the Gupta dominions, until 447 A.D. On the other hand, the Mankuwar (in Allahābād district) stone image inscription¹ of the year 129 G.E. (448-49 A.D.) gives Kumāra Gupta I the simple title of mahārāja. On the basis of this comparatively humble title Fleet suggested that towards the close of Kumāra Gupta's reign the power of the emperor was reduced to that of a feudatory, because of the attacks of the Hūnas and the Puṣyamitras. Although this is not impossible it should be remembered that we cannot make any sweeping statement without any clear evidence that he was actually reduced to the rank of a feudatory ruler, and the absence of imperial title is not a strong argument. Moreover, we find in the Ēran stone Pillār inscription (dated A.D. 484),² that Budha Gupta was called Bhūpati only. On the other hand, in the Dāmodarpur Plate (dated 163 G.E. = A.D. 482)³ he had the imperial titles Paramadaivata Paramabhāṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja. The inscription in

1. CII., III, No. 11, p. 46.

2. Fleet, CII., III, p. 89; Ibid., p. 88; SI., p. 326ff.

3. EI., XV, p. 135; SI., p. 328.

question did not emanate from court circles, but records the setting up of the image by a Buddhist monk, who might have bothered very little about the royal titles; therefore its evidence is quite inconclusive.

There is no doubt that Kumāra Gupta I Mahendrāditya was a great Gupta monarch. He maintained the vast empire intact, though in the last days of his reign he had to face serious danger from internal and external enemies. His reign had come to an end by A.D. 455,¹ when Skanda Gupta was ruling.

A critical period followed in the history of the Guptas. Around the time of the death of Kumāra Gupta I, the fortune of the family sank to a low ebb. The Girnar² and the Bhitari Inscriptions³ of Skanda Gupta show that when he came to the throne the Gupta empire was in great trouble as a result of the invasions of the Hūnas and the mysterious Puṣya-

1. He may well have died a year or two previously. See Basham, BSOAS, 1955, p.367.

2. GAU, III, pp. 56ff.

3. Ibid., pp. 52ff.

mitras.¹ It has been suggested that there was a war of succession at the death of Kumāra Gupta I and that Pūru Gupta, the elder brother of Skanda Gupta, ruled for a while, but was ousted by his abler brother, Skanda Gupta, and that when Skanda Gupta died without leaving heirs, the succession passed through the family of Pūru Gupta.² B.P.Sinha's main argument in favour of this hypothesis is that Pūru Gupta was the legal successor of Kumāra Gupta I as he was the son of the chief queen, whose name is mentioned in the inscriptions. On the contrary Skanda Gupta's mother is not mentioned in the inscriptions, and it is therefore generally accepted that he was not the son of the chief queen and thus not the legal heir to the throne. B.P.Sinha

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1. Fleet had placed the Puṣyamitras in the Vindhyān region in Central India (CII., III, pp. 55ff). H.R. Divekar read Yudhyamitra in place of Puṣyamitra in the Bhitari Pillar inscription, and identified them with the Hūnas. (ABORI, I, pt. 2, p. 99). D.C. Sircar thinks that 'it is not possible to be definite', (SI., p. 314, n. 2). Jagannath maintains that the reading is Puṣyamitra, and that the Puṣyamitras are known to have existed in Central India in the third century A.D. and so may have continued to live there in the middle of the fifth century (IHQ., XXII, pp. 112ff). The greatest problem in this identification is how ^{an} obscure tribal people could shake the mighty Gupta Empire almost to its foundations.
 2. DKM., pp. 23ff.

believes that he came to the throne immediately after the death of Kumāra Gupta, but was soon replaced by his step-brother, Skanda Gupta.¹ Prof. A.L. Basham² objects to B.P. Sinha's hypothesis, which, is quite vague. Prof. Basham says that "there is no evidence in Skanda's inscriptions to suggest that Pūru Gupta was the immediate successor of Kumāra Gupta".³ He states also that though the Goddess of Fortune is said to have "passed by all other sons of³ kings" (manujendra-putrān, perhaps "of the king") in favour of Skanda, "she is nowhere stated to have shown any of them even her temporary favour".⁴ It appears that Prof. Basham's objection is legitimate. The inscriptions suggest that Skanda Gupta was a prince endowed with kingly qualities (nṛpatiguna-niketaḥ) - and renowned for his mighty intellect and heroic nature; hence he was dear to his father before his accession to the throne.

There is also controversy about the date of Skanda's

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1. DKM., pp. 32-33.
 2. BSOAS, 1955, p. 369.
 3. CEI, III, p. 59., line 5.
 4. BSOAS, 1955, p. 369.

accession to the throne. The Junāgadh Inscription of Skandagupta refers to his pacification of the Empire, his appointment of Parnādatta as governor of Surāṣṭra, the latter's appointment of his son Cakrapālita as city governor, and the bursting of a large dam called Sudarśana. B.P.Sinha¹ maintains that the Junāgadh Inscription does not necessarily imply that Skanda Gupta was on the throne when the embankment burst. Professor A.L.Basham² argues that "it is very difficult to put any other interpretation on the words 'atha kramena' (Then in course (of time)), with which the real description of the calamity is introduced." He says also that they imply that "at the time Cakrapālita was already city governor, and had held the post long enough to become popular with the citizens; and Cakrapālita was the nominee of his father, who had been appointed by Skanda Gupta". Therefore, "Skanda Gupta must have been well established on the throne by August A.D., 455." Prof. Basham states further that the inscriptions show that Skanda Gupta succeeded his father. On their evidence it

1. DKM., 1954, p.45.

2. BSOAS, 1955, p.367.

would appear that the death of Kumāra Gupta must have happened at least a year before the bursting of the Sudarsana Lake and perhaps even earlier. It has been universally held that Kumāra Gupta died in March, 455 A.D. Prof. Basham¹ pointed out that this view solely depends on a unique silver coin of Kumāra Gupta I which bears the date, 136 G.E. (A.D. 455) and he claims that "this coin is not sufficient to outweigh the evidence of the Girnār Inscription", for coins can be issued in the name of a dead king for some months after his death, and thus he suggests that he died in A.D. 454 or perhaps even earlier.² It appears that this suggestion is logical.

After the death of Skanda Gupta, the history of the imperial Guptas is not clear. We know the names of several kings, but in many cases their dates and relations to each other cannot be definitely determined. But Pūru Gupta was the immediate successor of his brother Skanda Gupta; he had a short reign and after his death the imperial line was continued by his two sons Budha Gupta and Narasimha Gupta.³ Budha Gupta is known to have reigned

1. BSOAS, 1955, p. 367.

2. Ibid.

3. MAI, No. 66, pp. 64-65.

at least from A.D. 476 to A.D. 494-5. Meanwhile we have a record in a Sārnāth inscription of a Kumāra Gupta, whom we will call Kumāra Gupta II, whose ancestry is not recorded, reigning in A.D. 473.¹ A further reference to Kumāra Gupta, whom we will call Kumāra Gupta III, occurs in the Bhitari Seal,² where he is the son of Narasimha Gupta and the grandson of Puru Gupta. The identification of Kumāra Gupta of the Sārnāth inscription and Kumāra Gupta of the Bhitari Seal is a matter of dispute. According to some scholars³ the two Kumāra Gupta's are identical.

On the other hand N.K. Bhattasali, R.G. Basak and other scholars think that the Kumāra Guptas of the Bhitari seal and the Sārnāth epigraph were distinct individuals. Bhattasali places Kumāra, son of Narasimha Gupta, long after 500 A.D.⁴ But his theory is based upon the identification of Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya

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1. ASI., AR., 1914-15, p. 124; SI., pp. 320ff.
 2. JASBL, VIII, Pt. I (1889), p. 84ff; IA., XIX (1890), p. 225.
 3. See, ASI., AR., 1914-15, p. 124ff; Hindusthan Review, Jan, 1918, Ann., Bhand. Inst., 1918-19, pp. 67ff. and JBORS IV, pp. 344, 412 for the views of Venis, Pathak, Panday, Pannalall and others.
 4. Dacca Rev. May and June 1920, pp. 54-57.

with the conqueror of Mihirakula referred to by Hsüan Tsang;¹ this king must have ruled well into the sixth century. According to Basak Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth Inscription was the immediate successor of Skanda Gupta. In his opinion there were two rival Gupta lines ruling simultaneously, one consisting of Skanda Gupta, Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth Inscription and Budha Gupta, the other comprising Pūru, Narasimha Gupta and his son Kumāra Gupta III of the Bhitari Seal. Bhattasali's proposal is similar to that of Basak so far as its chronological effect is concerned.²

We cannot accept Basak's theory of a division in the Gupta line because there is nothing to prove that Skanda Gupta left any direct heir to succeed him. But we agree with him that Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth Inscription is a different ruler from the Kumāra Gupta of the Bhitari Seal, because the identification of the two involves almost impossible chronological difficulties. It might be suggested that the former was a governor of Pūru Gupta in Sārnāth but there is no reference to his overlord and he is referred to as mahārāja which makes such a theory

1. Watters, I, pp. 288-89.

2. HNEI, p. 72ff.

unlikely. In any case the reigns of Pūru Gupta and Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth epigraph were short, and must have comprised a period of less than ten years between c.A.D. 467 and 476. After the death of Skanda Gupta the Magadhan Empire passed to the descendants of Pūru Gupta, and these sat on the throne for the next four generations - Budha Gupta, Narasimha Gupta (son of Pūru Gupta), his son Kumāra Gupta III of the Bhitari Seal,¹ and Viṣṇu Gupta,² the son of Kumāra Gupta III.

Budha Gupta, the son of Pūru Gupta, was on the throne in c. A.D. 476-77, and he ruled for twenty years or more. The earliest limit for Budha Gupta's reign cannot be placed later than 157 G.E. (A.D. 476-77); for the Sārnāth inscription shows clearly that he was the reigning sovereign, when the Gupta year 157 had expired,³ or in the current Gupta year 158.⁴ Another copper-plate⁵ was found at Pāhārpur, in the Rajshahi district dated the

1. MAI, No. 66, pp. 64 ff.

2. EI., XXVI, p. 235; IHQ., XIX, p. 19.

3. ASI. AR., 1914-15, pp. 124-25; SI., p. 323.

4. Vide Pathak's 'New Light on the Gupta Era and Mihirakula' - R.G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume, Poona, 1927, p. 204.

5. EI., XX, p. 59 ff.

Chronological table of the Imperial Guptas

(on the basis of the above discussions)

1. Kumāra Gupta I (A.D. 415-454:5)

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| <p>2. Skanda Gupta (A.D. 454-5-467)</p> <p>4. Kumāra Gupta II (A.D. 473-76)
of the Sārnāth Inscription
(relation not settled)</p> | <p>3. Pūru Gupta (c.A.D. 467-476)</p> <p>6. Narasimha Gupta (c. A.D. 494-95 - 530-32).</p> |
| <p>5. Budha Gupta (c.A.D. 476-494-5)</p> <p>7. Vainya Gupta¹
(c.A.D. 507)
(relation not settled)</p> | <p>8. Kumāra Gupta (date?)
(III of the Bhitari Seal.)</p> |
| <p>9. Viṣṇu Gupta (?c. 543)</p> | |

1. The problem of Vainya Gupta will be discussed later. See below p. 166ff.

7th day of Māgha in the Gupta-Samvat 159 (A.D. 478-79). Although the name of the reigning king was not mentioned in the inscription, but only referred to by the word Paramabhaṭṭāraka, there is little doubt that the record belongs to the reign of Budha Gupta. Before the discovery of the Sārnāth inscription and the Dāmodarpur plates, the only known reference to Budha Gupta was the mention of him as a king on the Ēran Stone pillar inscription¹ bearing the date 165 G.E. (-A.D. 484-85) and on some silver coins,² one of which bears the date 175 G.E. (=A.D. 494-95)³. After the death of Skanda Gupta there were many troubles, both internal and external. The obscurity lifts somewhat with the accession of Budha Gupta. He succeeded in establishing a comparatively strong rule and brought peace and order over the extensive empire. It is not known how the reign of Kumāra Gupta of the Sārnāth Inscription ended. There are two identical votive inscriptions found at Sārnāth, dated in the current

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1. Fleet, CII., III, p. 89, ibid., p. 88, SI., p. 326.
 2. Allan, Gupta Coins, p. 153, and Intro., p. cv.
 3. Ibid., p. 153, Coin No. 617. If the reading of the date 180 on one of his silver coins were definite, his reign would extend to A.D. 499; Altekar's 'The Coinage of the Gupta Empire'. p. 275, n. 1.)

(Gupta) year 157, belonging to the time when 'Budha Gupta was ruling the earth'.¹ It is important to notice that the inscription of Kumāra Gupta II, dated in the year 154 (=473-74 A.D.) was also found at Sārnāth, and all these three inscriptions were engraved for the same donor, Abhayamitra.² It appears that Budha Gupta succeeded Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth inscription in or before 476 A.D. But the exact circumstances in which he came to the throne are not known. B.P. Sinha³ suspects that Budha Gupta may have overthrown Kumāra Gupta II. He says that the allusion to "Buddha Gupta" seizing the throne after Śakrāditya (identified by Sinha with Kumāra Gupta II) in the "Life" of Hsüan Tsang⁴ may suggest that Budha Gupta acquired the throne after some sort of coup d'état. This argument, however, depends entirely on the identification of Śakrāditya and Kumāra Gupta II, for which there is no evidence at all. Kumāra Gupta I is known to have had the biruda Mahendrāditya,

1. ASI., AR., 1914-15, pp. 124-125.

2. Ibid., p. 126.

3. DKM, p. 72.

4. The Life, p. 110.

and just possibly Hsüan Tsang's Śakrāditya is intended as a synonym of this, since Śakra is another name of the God Indra. But we have no evidence that Kumāra Gupta II employed the same biruda. In fact Hsüan Tsang's genealogy of the Guptas is so confused that it gives very little help to the historian.

Budha Gupta is regarded by H.C. Raychaudhuri¹ as a son of Kumāra Gupta I on the basis of Hsüan Tsang's statement that "Buddha Gupta" was a descendant of Śakrāditya.² R.G. Basak and others have suggested that Budha Gupta was a son of Kumāra Gupta II of the Sarnāth inscription.³ But the discovery of the Nālandā Seal⁴ of Budha Gupta sets aside all these speculations and confirms clearly that Budha Gupta was a son of Pūru Gupta.

Budha Gupta ruled over a fairly extensive empire. Six of his records have come to light and these prove with little doubt that his empire extended from Malwa to Bengal. The plates of the early Maitrakas suggest that they still owed very loose allegiance to the Guptas.⁵

1. PHAI; 1 (4th ed.) p. 365.

2. Watters, II, p. 164.

3. HNEI, pp. 72ff; ASI. AR., 1914-15, p. 126.

4. MAST., No. 66, p. 64.

5. K.J. Virji, Ancient History of Saurashtra, pp. 21ff.

No inscriptions of Skanda Gupta,¹ Pūru Gupta, Narasimha Gupta and Kumāra Gupta III have been found in Bengal. On the other hand Dāmodarpur copper plates Nos. 3 and 4² mention two governors of the Puṇḍravardhana bhukti, during the reign of Budha Gupta. The Pāhārpur (Rājshahi district) copper plate³ of 159 G.E. (A.D. 478) does not mention the emperor but it falls within Budha Gupta's reign. These three plates, studied along with the Eran pillar inscription⁴ of 165 G.E. (A.D. 484) and the Sārnāth image inscription⁵ of 157 G.E. (A.D. 476), indicate that his authority was acknowledged in part of Madhya Pradesh, in Uttar Pradesh and in Northern Bengal. Basak⁶ comes to the conclusion on the basis of the Dāmodarpur inscriptions of Kumāra Gupta I and Budha Gupta that the province of North Bengal (Puṇḍravardhana bhukti) must have remained in the sole

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1. Inscriptions of Skanda Gupta exist in different parts of the Gupta empire, but not in Bengal. No inscription of Pūru Gupta, Narasimha Gupta or Kumāra Gupta III has yet been found.
 2. EI., XV, pp. 118ff; SI., p. 324, p. 328.
 3. E.I. xx, pp. 59 ff.
 4. CII. III, p. 89; Ibid., p. 88; SI., p. 326.
 5. ASI. AR. 1914-15, pp. 124-25; SI., p. 323.
 6. Proc. ASB., 1882, p. 91., JRAS., 1889, p. 112.

and direct possession of Skanda Gupta and Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth inscription and the same system of provincial government must have continued in Bengal for at least about a century. Strictly speaking, we do not possess any positive evidence to show whether Skanda Gupta, Pūru Gupta and Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth inscription and Kumāra Gupta III of the Bhitari Seal ruled directly in Bengal. But the coins of Skanda Gupta and Kumāra Gupta III have been found there. Two gold coins of Skanda Gupta have been recovered, one each from Mahanada (in the district of Hooghly)¹ and Faridpūr,² besides some silver coins from Muhammadpur in the Jessore district.³ His silver coins are of both the Western and Madhyadesa types, and show the same characteristics as those of his father.

One of the Dāmodarpur copper plate inscriptions (Plate No.3) is dated G.E. 163⁴ (A.D. 482) two years earlier than the date of the Eran inscription of Budha Gupta's reign.

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1. Proc. ASB., 1882, p. 91. JRAS., 1889, p. 112.
 2. GRM (Varendra Research Society), p. 5.
 3. JASB., 1852, pp. 401-2; Altekar, op. cit., p. 356.
 4. EI., XV, p. 135, SI., No. 34, pp. 324 ff.

The date of the other Dāmodarpur record, Plate no. 4, is lost, while the date of the Pāhārpur plate is G.E. 159. This copper plate mentions that a Brāhmaṇa and his wife donated some land for the maintenance of the worship with sandal, incense, flowers etc. of the divine arhats in the Jaina Vihāra of Vaṭa-Gohāli, a village in Puṇḍravardhana. From this record it appears clearly that there was religious toleration in Bengal at the time. As we know, the Gupta emperors were Vaiṣṇavas but they used to respect the other sects.

The name of Budha Gupta is not mentioned in the Pāhārpur copper plate, but the emperor is referred to by his title Paramabhaṭṭāraka. The Dāmodarpur copper plates nos. 3 and 4 show that, like Kumāra Gupta I in plates nos. 1 and 2, Budha Gupta also assumed the imperial titles of Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Paramadaivata and Mahārājādhirāja. He also appointed the Governors of the bhuktis. His Dāmodarpur plates show that the Gupta administrative system was the same as in earlier times. Basak¹ has, however, noticed that during Budha Gupta's reign there was at least

1. EI., XV., pp. 121ff.

one change in governmental terminology in North Bengal. The Dāmodarpur plates Nos. 3 and 4 show that the bhukti governors assumed the title of Uparika-Mahārāja, Brahmadatta and Jayadatta¹ had this title. On the other hand, during the reign of Kumāra Gupta I, Cirātadatta had only the title uparika and the Viṣayapati (district officer) Vētravarman that of Kumārāmātya. From the Dāmodarpur plate No. 4 it appears, however, that the āyuktaka Sandaka (or Gaṇḍaka?) administered the viṣaya of Kotivarṣa from the adhiṣṭhāna (district headquarters) of that name. At this time, the viṣayapati had the title of āyuktaka instead of that of kumārāmātya.

The Dāmodarpur inscriptions Nos. 3 and 4 show that during the reign of Budha Gupta Brahmadatta and Jayadatta were the successive bhukti governors. It is difficult to determine who was appointed earlier. According to

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1. D.C. Sircar thinks that Nāgadatta of the Allāhābād Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta may be the king of Bengal who was extirpated by the Gupta monarch in the course of his digvijaya. He also says that it is not altogether impossible that this Nāgadatta was an ancestor of Brahmadatta, Cirātadatta and Jayadatta who were governors of the Puṇḍravardhana bhukti under the successors of Samudra Gupta (JRAS.NS., 1943-44, p. 67). This could be possible but in the inscriptions nothing is said to the effect that the Governors are kings or descendants of kings of North Bengal. Therefore, it is difficult to accept this theory, which is based solely on the similarity of names.

R.G. Basak the uparika-mahārāja Brahmadatta was the earlier bhukti governor. Basak pointed out that Dāmodarpur plate No. 5, dated 224 G.E. (A.D. 543-44)¹, mentions the name of the Nagaraśreṣṭhin Rbhupāla whose name is also mentioned in the Plate No. 4 (date lost) but not in the plate No. 3 dated 163 G.E. (A.D. 482), wherein Brahmadatta is mentioned. His argument is made quite clear by the following table:-

<u>Plate No.</u>	<u>Bhukti Governor</u>	<u>Administrative board</u>
No. 3. dated 163 G.E. i.e., A.D. 482	Brahmadatta	the <u>mahattaras</u> , the <u>aṣṭakulādhī-</u> <u>karaṇas</u> , the <u>grāmikas</u> and <u>kuṭumbins</u> .
No. 4. date lost	Jayadatta	the <u>nagaraśreṣṭhin</u> <u>Rbhupāla</u> , the <u>Sārtha-</u> <u>vāha</u> , <u>Vasumitra</u> , the <u>Prathamakulika</u> , <u>Vara-</u> datta and the <u>Prathama-kāyastha</u> Viprapāla.

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1. In his edition of the inscription (E.I.XV, p. 142) Basak read the date as G.E. 214, giving A.D. 533-4. The revised reading of K.N. Dikshit (EI., XVII, p. 193f), G.E. 224, is now generally accepted.

<u>Plate No.</u>	<u>Bhukti Governor</u>	<u>Administrative board</u>
No. 5	Rājaputra Deva-	the <u>Nagaraśreṣṭhin</u> ,
dated 224 G.E.	bhaṭṭāraka	Ārya Ṛbhupāla, the
A.D. 543		<u>Sārthavāha</u> , Sthānudatta
		the <u>Prathamakulika</u>
		Matidatta, the
		<u>Prathama Kāyastha</u>
		Skandapāla.

The argument from these names, however is not wholly conclusive, since plate no. 3, which is dated 163, G.E. refers to a place called Caṇḍagrāma, which was within Puṇḍravardhana Bhukti, but not, apparently, in Koṭiwarṣa Viṣaya, where the board of local dignitaries functioned. We would not therefore expect to find mention of the nagaraśreṣṭhin etc., in the third plate, since it applied to another district, apparently directly ruled by the Uparika mahārāja, where a different local constitution prevailed. However, the nagaraśreṣṭhin Ṛbhupāla was alive in A.D. 543 and we may suggest that his period of office could hardly have been more than about 50 years. Hence it is likely that plate 4 was issued towards the end of Budha Gupta's reign, and is thus later than plate 3.

Budha Gupta ruled over a fairly extensive empire. From his Eran stone pillar inscription dated G.E. 165 (A.D. 484-85)¹ we learn that while Budha Gupta was king (nrpa), Mahārāja Suraśmicandra was the governor of the country between the Kāṇḍī and the Narmadā. The Khoh copper plate inscription of Mahārāja Hastin² dated in the G.E. 156 and 163, 'in the enjoyment of the sovereignty of the Guptas,' must belong to the time of Budha Gupta. The inscriptions of the Uccakalpa Mahārāja Jayanātha of the years 174 and 177³ seem to be dated in the Gupta era,⁴ and during this period, which falls in the time of Budha Gupta, they must have been the feudatories of the Guptas. Two copper plates,⁵ referring to the king

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1. CII., III, p. 90f.
 2. Ibid., p. 93f.
 3. CII., III, Nos. 26-27.
 4. There is some controversy about the era in which the inscriptions of the Uccakalpa Mahārāja are dated. Kielhorn took it to be the Kalacuri era (EI., V, App. p. 55). Bhandarkar was of the same opinion (ibid., XIX, App. Note 5, p. 159). But the territories of the Uccakalpa Mahārājas were adjacent to those of the Parivrajaka Mahārājas who used the Gupta era and were the feudatories of the Guptas, and Hastin and Sarvanātha were contemporaries (CII., III No. 24). This raises a presumption that the Uccakalpa Mahārājas also dated their inscriptions in the Gupta era. Ojha and Halder (EI., XIX, p. 127) held that the era used was the Gupta era. Dikshit (EI., XXI, p. 127f.) has met the objections of Bhandarkar and has shown that it is not possible to date the Uccakalpa inscriptions in the Kalacuri era.
 5. EI., XV, p. 114.

with high sounding imperial titles Paramadaivata
Paramabhatta^{ya}ka Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Budhagupta Prthivīpati
 have been found at Dāmodarpur in the Dinājpur district in
 North Bengal. The fourth Dāmodarpur plate of Budha Gupta¹
 states that lands were given to erect a temple of Kokāmukha-
svāmin² in Himavacchikara (lit. the summit of the Himālaya).

1. EI., XV, pp. 115, 140.

2. R.G. Bāsak referred in this connection to Kokāmukhā,
 a form of the goddess Durgā and to the Kokāmukha tīrtha,
 both mentioned in the Mahābhārata. But he did not
 suggest any satisfactory identification of this god.
 Dr. D.C. Sircār suggests that Kokāmukha is a form of Śiva -
 (SI., p. 329, fn. 3). His theory is based on the supposed
 connection of the name Ādya-kokāmukhasvāmin, as mentioned
 in the Dāmodarpur inscription, with the appellations
 Ādyā and Kokāmukhā used in reference to Durgā, the
 consort of Śiva. According to Dr. H.C. Raychaudhuri
 (B.C. Law volume Part I p. 88), Kokāmukha is a form of
 Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu like Śvetavarāhasvāmin
 because Kokāmukha is associated with Śvetavarāhasvāmin.
 Dr. Raychaudhuri's view is based on the Brahma Purāṇa.
 In chapter 219 of this text there is a legend about the
 origin of a place of pilgrimage styled Kokāmukha tīrtha.
 In short it states how Viṣṇu in his Boar form saved the
 divine pitrs (forefathers) who had been plunged in the
 waters of the Kokā, a stream that dashed through the
 Himālayan rocks (śisir-ādrī). cf.

Verse 3:- Purā kokājale magnān pitṛy nuddhṛtavān bibhuh

Verse 17:- Koketi prāthitā loke Śisirādṛśamāśṛtā

Verse 36:- Kokāmukhe pitṛganam salile nimagnam Deva
 dadarśa Śirasātha śilām vahantam

Verse 39:- Varāhadamṣṭrāsamāgnāḥ pitarah kanakojjvalāḥ
 Kokāmukhe gatabhayāḥ kṛtā devena viṣṇunā

Verse 114:- Kokāpi tīrthasahitā samsthitā Girirājani

It is also added that the river Kokā became a famous
 holy spot because of the presence of the Varāha form of
 Viṣṇu.

Verse 106:- Kokā nadīti vikhyātā girirājasamāśṛitā tīrtha-
 koṭimahāpunyā madrūpaparipālītā.

But the question arises whether Budha Gupta's empire extended up to the Himālayas. The situation of the land granted to the gods Kokāmukhasvāmin and Śvetavarāhasvāmin suggests that it was not far from Dāmodarpur. But B.P.Sinha¹ is inclined to assume that Puṇḍravardhana bhukti in the time of Budha Gupta extended up to the Himālayas in the North. He also goes a further step and suggests that it might have included Nepal, where is situated Varāhakṣetra, which has been identified with Kokāmukhatīrtha.² Both D.C.Sircar³ and Raychaudhuri⁴ agree in placing this tīrtha in the Himālayan region. We wonder whether the power of the Gupta Empire was felt at that time in a region such a long distance from Puṇḍravardhana. Moreover it seems hardly likely that land in

footnote contd. from previous page....

Thus there was a holy spot somewhere in the Himālayas, known as Kokāmukha, presumably near the place where a small stream called Kokā joined a larger river. Kokāmukhasvāmin would be the god particularly associated with this place, evidently Viṣṇu. The association of Kokāmukha with the Varāha incarnation is striking, since both are referred to in our inscription.

1. DKM., p.76.
2. Ibid., IHQ., XXI, pp.56ff.
3. IHQ., XXI, pp. 56ff.
4. B.C.Law Volume Part I, pp. 88ff.

this district should be given to a remote and otherwise unknown temple in the Himālayas. Probably Himavacchikara was a local temple, famous for its high tower. It should be noted that the practice of adding Śikharas to temples was only just beginning in the Gupta period,¹ and even a comparatively small Śikhara might arouse surprise and wonder, earning for it some such exaggerated name as this. Himavacchikhara appears to be a local place somewhere within or near Puṇḍravardhana bhukti. There may have been some association between these two temples in Bengal, and the then famous Kokāmukha tīrtha, a holy place in the Himālayas, but it is most unlikely that the temples referred to in our inscription were so remote from the lands dedicated to them.

From the various records we find that Budha Gupta was on the imperial Gupta throne at least during the years from 157 G.E. to 175 G.E., i.e., from c. A.D. 476-77 to A.D. 494-95. It is evident that his reign was long and flourishing. The seal of Budha Gupta found at Nālandā² suggests his authority over Magadha. His tolerance towards

1. Classical Age, p. 508ff.

2. MAI, No. 66, p. 64.

Buddhism is testified by the fact that two votive images of Buddha¹ were donated during the period of his rule. Silver coinage was apparently not issued during the reign of Pūrva Gupta but this coinage was resumed by his son Budha Gupta. He is known to have issued silver coins only of the Madhyadesa type. No coins of his of any of the Western Indian types have so far come to light. This indicates that most probably the Guptas had lost much of their authority over the Western Provinces by this time.² The Eran inscription³ clearly confirms that the West was under feudatories such as Surasmicandra, who had almost complete autonomy. The Madhyadesa type of Budha Gupta is exactly similar to that of Kumāra Gupta I or Skanda Gupta.

Budha Gupta was then undoubtedly the last of the great imperial Guptas, and after his death the empire declined rapidly. His death seems to have been followed by a period of chaos and confusion. The empire practically broke up, and local dynasties rose to power in different parts of the Gupta Empire, while the Hūnas occupied much

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1. ASI., AR, 1914-15, pp. 124-25.
 2. CGE., p. 278.
 3. CII, III, pp. 89ff; SI., pp. 326ff.

of the West towards the end of the 5th century A.D.,¹
under the leadership of Toramāṇa.

Budha Gupta, ^{apparently} left no direct heir and in our scheme of chronology he was immediately succeeded by his brother Narasiṃha Gupta and the latter by his son Kumāra Gupta III of the Bhitari Seal, who was followed by his grandson Viṣṇu Gupta. The reigns of these three kings covered roughly the period between c.A.D. 495-96 (the last known date of Budha Gupta) and c.A.D. 543-44 (the date of the fifth Dāmodarpur copper plate.)

Narasiṃha Gupta was not destined to rule in peace. The Hūṇas again renewed their invasions and attacked the

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1. The earliest date of the Hūṇa king can be deduced with the help of the Eran (CII., III, no. 36; SI., No. 55) and Kura (Bühler, EI., vol. I, p. 238-39, SI., No. 56) inscriptions. The former inscription was engraved in the first regnal year of Toramāṇa and he is represented as the overlord of the local chief Dhānyaviṣṇu, whose elder brother Matriviṣṇu is dead. Another Eran stone pillar inscription (CII., III, p. 89; SI., No. 35) had been raised in 165 G.E. (A.D. 484). At this time the brothers Matriviṣṇu and Dhānyaviṣṇu were both alive. These two inscriptions are of considerable importance for they show that Toramāṇa was engraved in the first year of his occupation of this region. He is given high sounding royal titles, but the date of the inscription is unreadable. On the other hand the last certain date of Budha Gupta may be ascertained by his silver coins as 174 = A.D. 493 (M. Ch. 1894, p. 252). In these circumstances it appears that Toramāṇa occupied Eran soon after A.D. 484 and Budha Gupta continued to rule outside this province. It is also possible that Toramāṇa occupied the province after the death of Budha Gupta. But it is difficult to decide until further evidence comes to light.

Gupta empire more severely than before. During his reign Mihirakula, the greatest Hūna monarch, became very powerful. He is described by many Buddhist and non-Buddhist writers as a man of cruel disposition. Hsüan Tsang¹ says that soon after Mihirakula had consolidated his empire, he started to oppress the Buddhists. The Magadhan king Bālāditya heard the news of his cruel deeds. He used to care for the Buddhists very tenderly. Hearing of the atrocities he mounted guard on the frontier of his kingdom and refused to pay tribute to Mihirakula. The Hūna king became furious and marched against Magadha. Bālāditya knew the strength of the Hūna monarch and he did not fight with him. With the permission of his counsellors he left the capital and concealed himself among the bushes of a marshy land. He was popular with his people, and thus his followers amounted to many myriads. All of them fled with him and hid themselves in the Islands of the Sea.² Mihirakula reached Magadha and found that the

1. S. Beal. Si-yu-ki, p. 168-72; Watters, I, pp. 288-89.

2. The marshy land on the sea is probably the Gangetic delta, called Samatata in ancient times, because there were no marshy Islands of the Sea near Magadha except in this part of Bengal.

king had left and so, leaving his army under the command of his younger brother, he himself pursued the king of Magadha. In the marshy region Mihirakula was suddenly captured alive by the followers of Bālāditya. He was brought to the Magadhan court. Ashamed of his misfortune he covered his face with his mantle. Bālāditya ordered his execution, but released him on the intercession of his mother and allowed him to go back to his kingdom.

There is a controversy among scholars about the identification of Hsüan Tsang's Bālāditya and Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya. Hoernle¹ pointed out that Narasimha Gupta calls himself Bālāditya on his coins and that the Bālāditya of Hsüan Tsang must have reigned down to c.A.D. 530, since he was the approximate contemporary of Yaśodharman of Mandasor, who was ruling in A.D. 532; and he thinks that it is quite possible that Narasimha Gupta of the Bhitari seal reigned down to that date. Hence he is inclined to conclude that Narasimha Gupta of the Seal is identical with the Nara Bālāditya of the coins as well as

1. JASB., 1889, p. 97.

with the Bālāditya of Magadha, by whom or rather in whose reign Mihirakula was overthrown by Yaśodharman.¹ On these same numismatic grounds Bālāditya of Hsüan Tsang has been identified with Narasimha Gupta by Smith.² Smith says "the native princes under the leadership of Bālāditya, king of Magadha (the same as Narasimha Gupta) and Yaśodharman, a rājā of Central India appear to have formed a confederacy against the foreign tyrant."^{2a} But Allan,³ following the view of Fleet,⁴ believed that "Mihirakula was overthrown by Yaśodharman in the west and by Bālāditya in the direction of Magadha'. Allan further suggested that Narasimha Gupta (i.e., Bālāditya of Hsüan Tsang) "was simply successful in defending Magadha against Mihirakula's aggressions, and that Mihirakula was afterwards utterly routed and taken prisoner by Yaśodharman."

On this assumption the question arises as to who

1. JASB, 1889, p. 99

2. CCIM, p. 119ff. 2^a. E.H.I. (2nd ed) p. 300.

3. Allan - Gupta Coins, p. LIX.

4. IA., (1889), XVIII, p. 228.

defeated Mihirakula first. Mukherjee,¹ Allan² and Vasudeva Upadhyaya³ believe that he was first defeated by Bālāditya and then his final defeat came through Yaśodharman. Heras⁴ seems to reverse the two defeats, he says that Yaśodharman's conquest of Mihirakula was not final. But it appears from Hsüan-tsang's account that after being defeated by Bālāditya, Mihirakula lost his empire and fled to the north, and this story relates to his final expulsion from mid-India. It is also possible that the defeat of Mihirakula by Yaśodharman weakened him and gave Bālāditya the opportunity for insurrection. Smith⁵, Havell⁶ and Pathak⁷ think that Bālāditya and Yaśodharman defeated Mihirakula as allies in a single battle. Fleet⁸ seems to reconcile both views and puts forward a suggestion closely supported by Smith and his followers, that the Hūṇa king, Mihirakula was defeated in the west by Yaśodharman and in the east by Bālāditya.

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1. Mukherjee, Harṣa, p.59.
 2. Allan, op.cit., p.LIX,LX.
 3. IHQ., 1939, p.302-6.
 4. Rev.Fr.H.Heras. The final defeat of Mihirakula., IHQ., 1927, III, p.6.
 5. EHI., p.337.
 6. Havell. Aryan rule in India, p.175.
 7. K.B.Pathak. On the date of Kidāra, JBBRAS., XIX, p.35-43.
 8. IA., XVIII, p.228.

Some scholars¹ have identified Hsüan Tsang's Bālāditya with Bhānu Gupta, whom they believe to have fought with the Hūṇa leader Toramāṇa. But to us there is no solid evidence to support these views and we agree with B.P. Sinha² that there is no evidence that Bhānu-Gupta had the -āditya title Bālāditya. So we take Hsüan Tsang's Bālāditya to be the same as Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya, as is indicated by the numismatic evidence. In a later Nālandā Inscription³ Bālāditya is remembered as a king of irresistible valour and vanquisher of all foes.

There is no doubt that Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya was a great patron of Buddhism and the builder of a great monastery (saṃghārāma) at Nālandā.⁴ Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya may be identical with the Bāla of ^{the} Mañjuśrī-Mūlakaḥpa. He is said to have decorated the coast up to the sea with caityas, monasteries, gardens, pavilions, bridges and roads and to have worshipped Buddha images.⁵

1. e.g. Raychaudhuri, PHAI, (6th edn) p. 596-7; Saletore, Life in the Gupta Age, pp. 47ff; IHI, pp. 53ff.
2. DKM, p. 94, fn. 5.
3. EI, XX, 43-45.
4. The Life, p. 111; Watters, II, p. 164-65.
5. IHI, p. 33.

During the reign of Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya there was an obscure ruler of Western India named Yaśodharman who rose in power for a while. Very little is known of his origin. Suddenly, sometime about A.D. 530, Yaśodharman appears as a meteor in the political horizon, carries his victorious arms far and wide, and sets up a big empire. Like a meteor again, he suddenly vanishes and his empire perishes with him. Our chief knowledge of the achievements of Yaśodharman by way of military conquests is derived from an inscription¹ engraved in duplicate on two stone pillars at Mandasor. It is a praśasti like the Allāhābād pillar inscription, but unlike the latter it does not mention the countries conquered by Yaśodharman. Instead of these we find a boastful statement that he extended his conquests "from the neighbourhood of the Lauhitya up to Mahendra, and from the Himālayas to the Western Ocean". He further claims to have enjoyed those countries which were not enjoyed by Gupta lords. His greatest achievement was the humiliation of the Hūnas, whose command had "established

1. CII., III, Nos. 33 and 35.

itself on the tiaras of (many) kings" (kshatipati-mukut-adhyāsinī).¹ Basak² suggested that Yaśodharman's invasion of Bengal, or rather of Puṇḍravardhana, led to the end of the hereditary "Datta" family as governors of the Bhukti, since no "Datta" governor is mentioned in the fifth Dāmodarpur plate. In this respect we cannot agree with Basak because we do not have any positive evidence about it. Moreover how far this boastful statement of the Mandasor inscription of Yaśodharman is true, is difficult to say. Such conventional and general descriptions of universal conquest are not rare in ancient Indian sources. But there is no doubt that he was a great conqueror and particularly that he defeated Mihirakula. The exact limit of his empire cannot be defined. It seems that he could not completely annihilate the Gupta empire or the power of Mihirakula. His power was of short duration, and he rose and fell sometime before A.D. 540. After him we know nothing about his empire.

During the reign of Narasimha Gupta we find two

1. Ibid., No. 33, p. 146.

2. EI., XV, pp. 114-115.

obscure rulers named Bhānu Gupta and Vainya Gupta¹ who were ruling respectively in Madhya Pradesh and South-east Bengal. Bhānu Gupta is known from a single inscription at Eran (Sangor district, Madhya Pradesh) dated A.D. 510,² but neither his coins nor any royal seal of his have yet come to light. The inscription records how a subordinate chief named Goparāja accompanied "the mighty king, the glorious Bhānu Gupta the bravest man on the earth," and fought a famous battle. Goparāja was killed in the battle and his wife accompanied him on the funeral pyre.³ Though this inscription does not mention the name of the king against whom the battle was fought, we have noticed that Toramāṇa occupied Eran after the decline of Budha Gupta, and it was most probably he, as Sircar suggested, who encountered the Gupta chiefs.

We know the name of Bhānu Gupta only from the Eran Pillar inscription. His relationship with the imperial Guptas is not known, for nothing is said about it in his inscription. Jayaswal⁴ identifies Bhā of the Mañjuśrī-Mūla-kalpa with Bhānu Gupta, whom he took to be the Bālāditya of

1. For Vainya Gupta's Inscriptions, Coins and Seals, cf. IHQ., VI, p. 40; IX, p. 784, 989; XIX. 275.
2. CII., III, p. 92f; SI., No. 38, p. 335.
3. CII., No. 20, p. 92-3; SI., No. 38, p. 335. This is the first inscription which mentions the Satī custom in India.
4. IHI, pp. 47, 53.

Hsüan Tsang and the conqueror of Mihirakula. We have already rejected this identification. Therefore we take Bhānu Gupta as a petty Gupta ruler or a Gupta governor of Malwa. It is also possible that during the period of chaos and confusion he rose to power and fought with the Hūnas in order to save his country.

The fifth Dāmodarpur copper plate inscription which, according to R.G. Basak, contains the date 214 G.E. and the name Bhānu Gupta¹ has been shown to be dated in 224 G.E.,² and the name may be Kumāra Gupta or Viṣṇu Gupta. Basak³ accepted the revised reading of the date. Hence we cannot accept Basak's suggestion that the missing name of the fifth Dāmodarpur inscription is Bhānu Gupta; because it is not possible to assume the existence of Bhānu Gupta Bālāditya as emperor of India reigning from about c.A.D. 510 to 543. It is also important to note that in the Eran inscription of Goparāja,⁴ nothing is said about the ancestors of Bhānu Gupta, nor is he referred to with the Imperial titles common to the Gupta emperors. The Eran Inscription though it calls Bhānu Gupta rājā mahān

1. EI., XV, p. 115.

2. Ibid., XVII, p. 193.

3. HNEI., pp. 92-93.

4. CII., III, p. 93.

does not clearly indicate that he was the Gupta emperor. It seems that the expression "the bravest man on the earth, a mighty king equal to Pārtha" is just formal. We think that Bhānu Gupta either did not belong to the Imperial Gupta line or was a member of a collateral branch of it, and was a local ruler of Madhya Pradesh. During the critical time he may have governed as an independent ruler shortly before A.D. 510-11.

Another contemporary ruler of Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya and Bhānu Gupta was Vainya Gupta, who was ruling independently in South-east Bengal. We also know nothing about the ancestry of this Gupta emperor. We possess an inscription of Vainya Gupta dated 507 A.D.¹ This copper plate grant was discovered in Gunaighar, eighteen miles to the north west of the town of Comilla in the district of Tippera. The inscription with a seal attached bears the name Mahārāja Śri Vai (nya Gupta) and the plate is dated in the Gupta year 188 i.e., A.D. 507. This inscription shows that Samatāṭa, which was an autonomous feudatory state in the days of Samudra Gupta, had lost that status and now formed part of the dominions

1. IHQ., VI, p.53ff; SI., No. 37, pp.331.

directly held by the Guptas. The absence of the imperial title (Mahārājādhirāja Paramabhaṭṭāraka), the use of the subordinate title (Mahārāja), the invocation to Mahādeva, and the bull on the seal instead of Garuḍa, may lead one to assume that Vainya Gupta was a petty ruler, not a paramount king belonging to the Gupta dynasty.¹ But the question is settled by the discovery of the Nālandā seal of Vainya Gupta, which gives him the imperial title Mahārājādhirāja.² The seal was found with the other royal seals of the Gupta emperors. There can be hardly any doubt that Vainya Gupta of the seals is the same person as he of the Gunaigarh plate. Some earlier scholars³ would like to regard him as the son and successor of Budha Gupta, but, as we have seen already, it is now known that Budha Gupta was succeeded by his brother Narasimha Gupta. We must assume that Budha Gupta did not have any son to rule the remains of the Gupta Empire. Jayaswal⁴ argues that according to the Mañjuśrī-Mūla-Kalpa "after the death of Budha Gupta two kings in the Gupta line were crowned, one in Magadha

1. IHQ., 1930, VI, p. 45ff.

2. MAI., No. 66, p. 67.

3. IHQ., IX, p. 783; Vākātaka Gupta Age, p. 174.

4. Modern Review, August, 1933, p. 139.

another in Bengal (Gauda)". D.C.Ganguli¹ says that Vainya Gupta ascended the throne of Magadha after Budha Gupta and ruled Bengal through his viceroys. But R.C. Majumdar is not inclined to agree with him. He thinks that Vainya Gupta "was a member of the imperial Gupta family and acted at first as a de-facto independent ruler whose dominion included Eastern Bengal".² It appears that R.C.Majumdar's view is more logical than the other. As we have already noticed, the death of Budha Gupta was followed by a period of troubles, caused chiefly by the renewed invasion of the Hūnas with far greater success than before; in such circumstances the subordinate chiefs might be expected to rise to power. It is also possible that Vainya Gupta took this opportunity and assumed the imperial title in Magadha and ruled there for a short time. It seems that after his death the Empire again passed to the main imperial line, either because he had left no direct heir or because he was overthrown by the legitimate ruler Narasimha. If, as seems probable,

1. IHQ., IX, p.788.

2. HBR., I, p.50.

Narasimha came to the throne immediately after Budha Gupta, the ruler of Vainya Gupta must be regarded as the temporary usurpation of a subordinate mahārāja ~~of~~ Bengal, who felt strong enough to assume imperial titles and for a while gained control of the Eastern parts of Bengal.

In the Gunaigarh inscription and the Nālandā seal of Vainya Gupta nothing is said about his ancestry. B.P.Sinha¹ thinks that he may have been a son either of Kumāra Gupta II of the Sārnāth inscription or of Budha Gupta. He gives no arguments at all in favour of the former theory and as far as the latter is concerned he suggests that Vainya Gupta was the same as Tathāgatarāja who followed "Budha Gupta" according to Hsüan Tsang's² very defective genealogy of the Gupta kings. We have already mentioned that Budha Gupta was succeeded by his brother Narasimha Gupta. Moreover there is no positive evidence to convince us that Vainya Gupta was either the son of Kumāra Gupta II or of Budha Gupta. Therefore B.P.Sinha's suggestions are both untenable. Vainya's ancestry still

1. DKM, p.98.

2. Watters II, p.164.

remains mysterious and we have to leave this problem until further evidence appears. Since Gupta names were common enough, and he makes no claim to any connexion with the main Gupta line it is quite possible that he was not related to the imperial Guptas at all.

B.P.Sinha¹ also suggests that Vainya Gupta was a puppet raised on the throne by Toramāṇa after the defeat of Narasiṃha Gupta. There is again no solid evidence to support this view. It appears from the Gunaigarh plate that under him there were two governors with high sounding titles. He also issued a royal seal which testifies to his imperial title Mahārājādhirāja and ^{to} his supreme authority over Bengal and Magadha. This evidence indicates that he was not a feudatory of the Hūṇas.

The authority of Vainya Gupta appears to have been short lived, and after his death Narasiṃha Gupta and his son and grandson successively ruled over Magadha and Bengal. Narasiṃha Gupta was succeeded by his son Kumāra Gupta III. Most of his coins are found in the Kālighāt

1. DKM., p.98.

hoard.¹ The Mañjuśrī-Mūla-kalpa² apparently mentions him as the great "lord of Gauḍa" under the name ^{Bāla} B.P. Sinha is inclined to think that his reign came to an end with the invasion of Yaśodharman in c.A.D. 530.³ But we do not have any positive evidence of this. It is possible that Kumāra Gupta III came in contact with Yaśodharman when he invaded Bengal. But the result of his invasion is not clear to us, and indeed we have only the exaggerated claims of the Mandasor Inscription to indicate that he invaded Bengal at all. Most probably Kumāra Gupta III was succeeded by his son Viṣṇu Gupta in or before A.D. 543-44 as attested by the last Dāmodarpur copper plate,⁴ which we believe to be his. His coins have been found in the Kālighāt hoard.⁵

In the fifth Dāmodarpur⁶ copper plate of the year 224 (A.D. 543-44) the name of the Gupta emperor is lost. Basak suggested that the name is Bhānu Gupta.⁷

1. CCGDBM., p. lx; cxxvi.

2. IHI., p. 60.

3. DKM., 117.

4. EI., XV, pp. 141ff.

5. CCGDMB, p. xxxvi.

6. EI., XV, p. 142; XVII, p. 193; SI., p. 337.

7. EI., XV, p. 142.

Other scholars have put forward different suggestions about the name of this Gupta king. Dikshit¹ suggested that the name may be Kumāra. Y.R.Gupte² and Bhaṭṭasali³ took the name to be Kumāra Gupta and identified him with Kumāra Gupta III, the son of Nara-simha Gupta. D.C.Sircar⁴ took him to be Kumāra Gupta of the later Gupta line, known generally as the Guptas of Magadha. B.C.Sen⁵ suggested that he was Dāmodara Gupta, son of Kumāra Gupta of the later Gupta dynasty. R.C.Majumdar⁶ also suggested that the overlord in question belonged to the dynasty of the later Guptas who claimed suzerainty over Northern Bengal down to the end of the 6th century A.D.

It should be noted that apparently only two akṣaras (letters) are missing before Gupta in the copper plate. There is hardly enough space where the name of the emperor was engraved to contain four or three letters, and thus the readings Dāmodara or Kumāra are unlikely. Moreover we learn from the Harāhā

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1. EI., XVII, note 1.
 2. Journal of Indian Hist. IV, p. 118.
 3. EI., XVII, p. 84.
 4. SI., p. 33, note 4.
 5. Hist. Aspects of Beng. Insp., pp. 239ff.
 6. HBR, I, p. 49.

inscription¹ that Kumāra Gupta of the later Gupta line and Īśānavarman Maukhari were contemporaries, and that inscription is dated in 554 A.D., during the reign of Īśānavarman. We agree with B.P.Sinha² that it is very unlikely that Dāmodara Gupta, son of Kumāra Gupta, would be ruling with full imperial titles in A.D. 543-44. It is also important to notice that neither Kumāra Gupta nor Dāmodara Gupta is referred to by such high sounding imperial titles in the Apsad inscription.³ As we have already seen, Bhānu Gupta was not an imperial ruler at all. Moreover, it appears that the fifth Dāmodarpur plate, from a comparison with the other four Dāmodarpur plates, belonged to the imperial Gupta rulers, since the terminology and system of local government are the same. It is probable that the missing name in the Dāmodarpur inscription is Viṣṇu Gupta, the son and successor of Kumāra Gupta III. Thus according to our scheme of chronology it is probable that Viṣṇu Gupta was the imperial suzerain in A.D. 543-44.

There is no doubt that he issued seals and coins and was referred to with imperial titles like his

1. EI., XIV, pp. 110ff.
2. DKM, p. 125.
3. CII., III, No. 42, pp. 200ff.

predecessors. His authority in North Bengal was recognised and his hold on Magadha may be easily presumed. His seal has been found at Nālandā. Most of his coins are from the Kālighāt hoard. Viṣṇu Gupta is the last known member of the Imperial dynasty. From a passage in a Jaina Harivamśa,¹ we come to know that the illustrious rule of the Guptas lasted for 231 years. Fleet² remarks that "Jinasena has hit off pretty accurately the duration of the Gupta power". Therefore, the rule of the Gupta dynasty may have come to an end in $(319 + 231 =)$ A.D. 550-1. Moreover, the Amauna copper plate of Mahārāja Nandana³ is dated in (Gupta) saṃvat 232 (=551-2 A.D.) and, instead of mentioning the name of the emperor with the usual titles, it mentions only Nandana's Guru. It may be that at that time there was no Gupta emperor on the throne.

A few years ago a set of inscribed copper plates were discovered from a mound near the village of Sumaṇḍala in the Ganjam District, Orissa.⁴ The date of the inscription is indicated in words:-⁵ varttamāna-Gupta-

1. IA., XV, pl. 142.

2. Ibid., p. 143.

3. EI., X, pp. 49ff.

4. EI., XXVIII, pp. 79ff. (1952-58).

5. Ibid., p. 80.

rājyē varṣa-sata-dvayē pañcāśad-uttarē (in lines 2-3).

It says that in the Gupta year 250 (A.D. 569) the Gupta-rājya or the Gupta empire, was varttamāna, or "still existing". Prthivivigraha-bhaṭṭaraka was a ruler of Kalingarāṣṭra, apparently forming a part of this Gupta rājya. Thus he seems to have been a viceroy of the Guptas in the second half of the sixth century. But the question can be put forward about his overlord. We have already mentioned above that the latest imperial Gupta record is dated in the Gupta year 224 (A.D. 543). After this date, the glory of the Imperial Guptas is practically over, as far as we can gather from existing records. By this time, the Guptas had lost their suzerainty over Magadha, as is proved by the Amauna Copper plate, mentioned above. That the heart of the Gupta empire in Bihar and the U.P. passed soon after that date (A.D. 543-4) to the Maukharis is also confirmed by the Hārāha inscription¹ dated Vikrama Saṃvat 611 (A.D. 553), of the time of Īśānavarman, the first imperial ruler of the Maukhari family, as well as by the Deo-Baranārka inscription,² referring to the rule of Śarvavarman and

1. EI., XIV, pp. 115ff.

2. CII., III, pp. 215ff.

Avantivarman, son and grandson respectively of Īśānavarman, over the Shāhabād District of Bihar.¹ But the Sumaṇḍala inscription, mentioned above, seems to indicate the continuity of the imperial Gupta rule as late as A.D. 569. It is rather difficult to accept the view that Orissa continued to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Guptas.² For one thing, we have no evidence that any Orissan rulers after those defeated by Samudra Gupta acknowledged Gupta suzerainty, far less that any part of Orissa was ever directly administered by the Gupta Empire. Moreover, we know nothing about Prthivīvigraha or his family. His relationship with the Guptas is not stated in the inscription. He had a bhaṭṭāraka title and his subordinate chief was called Mahārāja Dharmarāja. It appears from his title that Prthivīvigraha was ruling over Kalinga as an independent ruler. Possibly he began his career as a Gupta viceroy in some other region and managed to establish himself in Orissa after the disintegration of the great Gupta Empire, from which he was expelled by

1. JRASB (Letters) vol. XI, pp. 72-74.

2. C.A. pp. 44, 92-93.

one of the successor dynasties. Some hypothesis such as this would explain his use of the Gupta Era, out of long habit and from loyalty to his former masters. Therefore, this inscription does not prove that the Guptas were ruling over this region at so late a date.

On the ruins of the Gupta empire the Maukharis and the later Guptas rose to power and for a long time there was a constant struggle between them. It seems that the reign of the last Gupta emperor ended in the midst of conflicts between the Maukharis and the later Guptas.

CHAPTER V

Bengal after the Guptas.

The Gupta empire finally disintegrated about the middle of the sixth century A.D. and there arose independent dynasties like the Maitrakas of Valabhi, the Maukharis and the Later Guptas in different parts of the empire. An independent kingdom arose in Bengal on the ruins of the Gupta empire. It seems to have included the eastern and Southern parts of Western Bengal. Two of its important provinces were Vardhamāna-bhukti¹ and Navyāvakaśikā,² roughly corresponding respectively to Western and Southern Bengal.³

Four copper plates⁴ found at Koṭalipādā in the Faridpur district and another from the Burdwan district⁵

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1. Mallasārul C.P. of Gopacandra, Year 3. EP Ind.XXIII, p.155.
 2. EP Ind.XVIII, pp.74ff.
 3. R.C.Majumdar, op.cit., p.51.
 4. Three of these were edited by F.E.Pargiter in Indian Antiquary, XXXIX (1910) pp. 193-216. The fourth grant was edited by R.D.Banerjee (JASB.NS., VI, p.429); Pargiter, JASB., vol.VII, p.476; and N.K.Bhattacharya, EP Ind.XVIII, p.74ff. D.C.Sircar, Select Inscriptions, pp.350-364. 1942.
 5. EP., Ind., XXIII, p.155.

brought to light the existence of three rulers of the kingdom, named Gopacandra, Dharmāditya and Samācāradeva. The discovery of a few of their coins made it clear that they were three independent kings bearing the imperial title of Mahārājādhirāja and that they ruled in Eastern Bengal. They were probably "related to one another and formed a dynasty that took the place of the Guptas in Eastern India" as concluded by N.K.Bhattacharya.¹ R.G. Basak² does not however agree that they were sovereigns reigning over the whole of Eastern Bengal. He explains that "it seems quite probable that they were rulers in Samatāṣṭa only, with full and independent power exercising jurisdiction over its different parts through the agency of Governors, e.g., in the Vāṛakamaṇḍala³ and also having feudatory chiefs under their suzerainty".⁴

We are not convinced by this argument, however, and suggest that these three kings made themselves

1. EP. Ind., vol. XVIII, No. 11, P. 84.

2. Hist. of North-Eastern India, p. 187.

3. This is an entirely new name which is completely unknown in earlier records. It appears first in the Faridpur plates. According to Pargiter it should be connected with modern Barid, that is Barendra { Sanskrit, Varendra }, North Bengal.

4. Basak, op. cit., p. 187, 1933. Calcutta.















independent in Eastern India after the downfall of the imperial Guptas towards the middle of the sixth century A.D., and ruled in different parts of Bengal, including even Puṇḍravardhana and Karnaśuvārṇa, by a system of administration through the agency^{of} governors and district officers working under them.¹ It seems to us that these three kings ruled from the place, from where Vainyagupta was ruling.

R.D.Banerji² at first believed that all these Faridpur records are spurious, but he was later convinced of their authenticity. Bloch³ also regarded the copper plate of Samācāradeva as spurious. But Pargiter⁴ proved their genuineness, which is no longer doubtful. The relationship between the three kings Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva is not known and even their order of succession is a matter of dispute.

Pargiter⁵ regarded Dharmāditya as earlier than Gopacandra on two grounds - (a) the use of earlier and later forms of the letter ya in their respective plates;


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- H.N.EI
 1. HN.EI., pp.187ff.
 2. BI. Beng.I. 2nd ed. p.94.
 3. ASI.AR.1907-8, p.499.
 4. JASB.NS.VII, p.499.
 5. IA., 1910, pp.206ff.

(b) the epithets pratīta dharmasīla applied to the land-measurer Śivacandra in the plate of Gopacandra.

Pargiter points out that plate A is dated in the third year of the emperor Dharmāditya; plate B, though undated, belongs to the same emperor, and plate C is dated in the 19th year¹ of the emperor Gopacandra. He shows that there are two forms of the akṣara "ya" in the plate A, -  and  . They occur uncompounded 25 times clearly, of which  ya is used in 15 instances and  in 10. In plate B the same two forms are found and occur uncompounded 23 times legibly, but the second form  is preferred, for it is used 13 times clearly and three times probably, while  occurs only 3 times clearly and 4 probably. In plate C the same two forms are found, together with a new form  . In this plate (c)  is used only 3 places, while  is used in 8. Hoernle² has shown that  and  are the older forms and  the later. According to Pargiter  is an intermediate modification of  and he thus comes to

1. IA., 1910, p. 206.

2. IA., 1892. XXI, p. 29.

the conclusion that Dharmāditya is the earliest emperor and ruled before Gopacandra. Pargiter took this akṣara  as ya but Dani¹ has taken it as a gha instead of ya. Therefore, it is rather difficult to come to a logical conclusion on the basis of palaeography, because palaeography does not give a safe basis for comparative chronology within a short period of time, say less than a century. The palaeographic evidence, however is at least sufficient to give a very strong indication that Plate C is later than plates A and B, since it contains a form of ya which is definitely later than those of the other two plates.

Another argument of Pargiter² is the title of the land-measurer Śivacandra. Śivacandra had the title pratīta-dharmasīla 'trusty and upright' (1.18-19). Pargiter, pointed out that in plate A, Śivacandra is referred to without his title, and in plate B he is styled as dharmasīla (1.19), and also pratīta. He³ further states that "these epithets are put into the

1. Indian Palaeography, Plate XIa, Beng.5.6.

2. I.A. 1910 p. 207.

3. Ibid.

mouths of the local folk and could have been given him only after he had earned their high opinion by long and upright service; hence, he must have been an old man when plates B and C were granted, and a young man with his reputation to make when plate A was executed." On these two grounds he says that A is the oldest plate, B next and C the latest. R.C.Majumdar¹, on the other hand, deduced exactly the opposite conclusion, that "the epithets were done away with after Śivacandra had been sufficiently long in service when his name was too well-known to require any testimonial." Moreover, we have already seen that variations in titles may not be very important as historical evidence. Though we cannot come to a definite conclusion on the basis of the epithets and the palaeography it is probable that Dharmāditya preceeded Gopacandra, on the basis of the later form of ya appearing in the latter's plate.

Some scholars,^{1a} however, suggest that Gopacandra preceeded Dharmāditya. Their suggestion is solely based

1. HB. I. p. 53 f. n. 2.

1a. E.g., R.C.Majumdar, HBI, p. 53; SI, p. 359, n. 5.

on the Gunaighar inscription of Vainya Gupta which mentioned Vijayasena as an envoy of that king, and on the Mallasārul copper plate of Gopacandra and Vijayasena, in which the former is overlord of the latter. According to these scholars Vijayasena of the Gunaighar copper plate and Vijayasena of the Mallasārul copper plate are the same person. They think that after the reign of Vainya Gupta Gopacandra established his independent kingdom and Vijayasena changed his allegiance. But we cannot accept their suggestion. Vijayasena must have been quite a common name among the ruling classes of the time, and the evidence is not sufficient to outweigh the arguments already put forward to suggest that Gopacandra followed Dharmāditya. Moreover Vainya Gupta was a Gupta emperor as is confirmed by the Nālandā Seal. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to assume that his successors should enjoy the empire after his death. We believe that after the reign of Vainya Gupta (c.A.D.507) South East Bengal passed to the line of Imperial Guptas who were reigning in North Bengal over the first half of the sixth century A.D.,

as is confirmed by the fifth Dāmodarpur copper plate. And it appears that only after the fall of the Imperial Guptas did south east Bengal become independent, when it was ruled by the three kings, Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva. Thus we believe that Vijayasena of the Gunaighar inscription was not the same person as Vijayasena of the Mallasārul copper plate.

Pargiter, in agreement with Hoernle,¹ puts forward the view that Dharmāditya was another name of Yaśodharman of the Mandāsor (Western Malwa) inscriptions, who would then have reigned for forty years from c. A.D. 528-568. It should be remembered that the only known date of Yaśodharman is A.D. 530-32. We learn from his Mandasor inscription that the climax of his success was reached within the years A.D. 530-32. After this date we do not have any more evidence about his growing power and prestige. It appears that he did not live long after, otherwise we should have had more evidence of his activities, though

1. Hoernle at first suggested that he was identical with Samudra Gupta (IA., 1882, p. 45) but later with Yaśodharman (JRAS., 1909, p. 136 n. 1).

there is no reliable evidence to show when his reign began or when it ended. We conclude that his death occurred some time around A.D. 535-37. Therefore we cannot agree with those who try to identify Dharmāditya with Yaśodharman. Regarding Gopacandra Hoernle and Pargiter have suggested that he may have been a grandson of Narasimha Gupta Bālāditya and a son of Kumāra Gupta III of the Bhitari seal.¹ But there is no trustworthy evidence on which to base their suggestion, which is based solely on the Tibetan tradition preserved by Taranātha which mentions that prince Gopacandra was a grandson of Bālāditya. How far this tradition bears any historical value is difficult to say. The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa mentions another Gopa who is the king of the East; he may be the same as Gopacandra.

We shall now discuss the materials for the history of Eastern Bengal as far as this is possible on the basis of the four Faridpur copper plate grants. Two of these plates (A and B) belong to the reign of Mahārā-

1. IA., 1910 p.208.

jādhirāja Paramabhaṭṭāraka Dharmāditya.¹ The first plate was issued in the third regnal year of the emperor; the second is not dated; circular seals are attached to both plates (A and B) with the legend Varakamandala-viṣay-ādhiparāṇasya. The seal also shows a figure standing in the middle and an elephant pouring water upon it.

Grant A states as its object the donation of about three kulyavāpa of cultivated land (kṣetra) in the village of Dhruvilāti to a Brāhmaṇa. The donor bought the land from the mahaṭṭaras (village elders) at the customary price and donated it to a Brāhmaṇa named Candrasvāmin. The object of grant B is similar to that of A. The donor of the plate A was the Sādhanika² Vatabhoga, and that of B Vāsudeva-Svāmin, who was an official supervising the customs dues in the district. He also bought the land from the mahaṭṭaras

1. IA., (1910) p.195f.

2. This term does not occur in the dictionary of Monier Williams. According to Pargiter the term denotes somebody who transacts any kind of business. In plate A it seems to denote some kind of agent or attorney who was no doubt appointed by the lord of the district to transact business in general on his behalf. Ind.Ant. 1910.p.211.

to give it to a Brāhmaṇa. These two grants describe Dharmāditya as "equal in steadfastness to Nṛiṅga, Nahuṣa, Yayāti and Ambiraśa".¹ During his reign the uparika Nāgadeva had also the title of Mahāpratihāra in New Avakāsikā. Nāgadeva seems to have originally been a Mahāpratihāra, but later he was appointed uparika of Navyāvakāsikā district.² Nāgadeva had obtained this title by gratifying the emperor, Dharmāditya. Gopāla-Svāmin was the customs officer; he was appointed in this district by Nāgadeva.

Grant C of Gopacandra had a similar object as grants A and B. It is also fastened by a circular seal with the same legend as that found on A and B. This grant gives the impression that Gopacandra was as powerful a king as Dharmāditya. Some scholars³ suggest that Gopacandra apparently belonged to a local family which assumed independence about the downfall (sic) of the Imperial Guptas." His dominions "extended over a wide

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1. The names of some famous kings of Brahmanical tradition. SI., p.354, fn.3.
 2. SI., p.354, fn.6. Navyāvakāsikā may have derived its name from a canal. Ibid., Avakāśa = opening, ibid.
 3. E.g. D.C.Sircar, op.cit. p.357, fn.1.

area including the Faridpur district in central Bengal and the Burdwan district in South-east Bengal." During his reign the uparika Nāgadeva also served as a Mahā-pratihāra and administered the maṇḍala while Nayasena was the chief administrator of the Viṣaya during the reign of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra. Vatsapāla¹svāmin was appointed over trade in the same district. Śivacandra, the land measurer also served under them.

The Faridpur copper plates¹ show that the province of Vāraka was administered as a local kingdom under the supreme monarch, who has the title of Mahārājādhirāja. This province appears to have been governed by an officer who got his appointment by the favour of the paramount ruler (tat-Prasāda-labdh-āspade² Plate A, tat-anumodanā-labdh-āspado - cf. Plates B and C). In plate A the local ruler was the mahārāja Sthāṇudatta. In the plates B and C no such king is mentioned, but we have the uparika Nāgadeva governing the maṇḍala, with the title of mahāpratihāra. This term denotes, as appears from plate C, some kind of

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1. JASB., 1910, p. 429, Ibid., 1911, p. 289ff, Ibid. 1914, p. 425ff. EP. Ind. vol. XVIII, p. 74ff; Ind. Ant. 1910, p. 193ff. SI., p. 350ff. 1942.
 2. āspada = authority or office. SI., p. 351, fn. 1.

high-ranking minister (mūla-kriyāmaṭṭya) and not, as usual elsewhere, a court chamberlain. So Nāgadewa did not have the title of Mahārāja but rather that of a great officer. Hence we see that some change had taken place in ^{the older forms of} provincial government as we find in the Dāmodarpur copper plates. The word Navyāvakasikā or New Avakāśikā is mentioned in the plates B and C. On both occasions, the Uparika Nāgadewa was administering the Vārakamaṇḍala but the word New Avakāśika cannot refer to his rule. The meaning of this word is not clear in these plates. At first Pargiter¹ ^{was} inclined to interpret it as the name of a town, the provincial capital. But Dr. Hoernle,² suggested that the word New Avakāśikā might mean, "during the new or recent interval", and refer to some kind of interregnum. Pargiter, ~~also~~ gave up his original interpretation and thought that Hoernle's suggestion must be right.

But the fourth plate³ militates against this view. It makes its meaning clear. In it Samācāyadana is the

1. IA., 1910, p. 210.

2. Ibid.

3. EI., XXIII, p. 159ff.

supreme monarch, as were Dharmāditya and Gopacandra,
 The plate mentions that and Jivadatta^{who} is the chief officer appointed over
 Suvarṇavīthī, who is the Uparika in Navyāvakāśikā.
 He obtained this post through paying ^uco~~rt~~ to Samā-
 cāradeva, and under him Pavitraka is the ruler of the
 district in Vārakamaṇḍala. The context here seems
 incompatible with treating navyāvakāśikā as anything
 but a place. Moreover the copper plate No.4 is dated
 in Samācāradeva's fourteenth year so that it must be
 at least 14 years later than plate C in Gopacandra's
 18th year, and the expression "the new (or recent)
 interval" can hardly be applied to a period of not less
 than 32 years. It appears from these plates that a
maṇḍala was divided into a number of viṣayas or districts
 which were under local administration known as adhikaraṇa.
 The district was under a single viṣayapati, "lord of the
 district", as in plate A; or it was managed by a Board
 of Officials, of whom one was pramukha, "chief", as in
 plates B and C. But these copper plates do not mention
 the name of this district at all. Under the district
adhikaraṇa there were subordinate officials such as

(1) the Sādhānika,¹ (2) the officer who looked after the vyāpāra, (3) the mahaṭṭaras (4) the pustapāla, and (5) the land measurer.

Another copper plate of Gopacandra has been discovered at Mallasārul in the Burdwan District. This copper plate is earlier than the Faridpur copper plate of Gopacandra's regnal year 18,² and the date of the Mallasārul copper³ plate is given as the regnal year 3. This Mallasārul copper plate gives a long list of administrative officials, vis., Kārttākṛtika, Kumārāmātya, Caurōddharanika, Uparika, Audraṅgika, Agraharika, Aurṇasthānika, Bhōgapatika, Viṣayapati, Tadāyuktaka etc.⁴ These officers are mentioned immediately after Vardhamāna-bhukti, therefore they must have held different administrative posts which were directly concerned with this bhukti. This inscription mentions also a list of the Elders and other important persons.

This copper plate was issued by Vijayasena during the

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1. See below p. 367
 2. SI., p. 357; Pargiter read the date as 19.1.A. (1910), XXXIX, pp. 204ff.
 3. EI., XXIII, p. 159ff; SI., p. 359.
 4. See below pp. 359ff

reign of king Copacandra. Its object was to confer a piece of land on a Brāhmaṇa in order that he might perform the five great sacrifices.¹ The transaction took place in the following way:- Vijayasena appealed to the mahattaras (Elders) and other important persons of the neighbouring villages and also to the office of the vīthī (vīthī-adhikaraṇa), the vīthī court and the elders enquired into the matter and declared that "a sixth part of the religious merit will accrue to the Paramabhaṭṭāraka (i.e., the king), and they themselves as the protectors of the gift will have fame and prosperity".²

The fourth Faridpur copper plate³ gives Samācāradeva titles similar to those of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra, who are equal in steadfastness to Nṛga, Nahuṣa Yayāti and Ambirasa.

These Faridpur copper plates were documents of the same type and form as the Dāmodarpur, the Dhanidaha, the Pāhārpur and the Baigrām inscriptions. They were

1. EI., XXIII, p.160 (line 10); SI., p.361, (line 10).

2. EI., XXIII, pp.157ff.

3. JASB., VII., NS., 1910 p.476ff; EI., XVIII, p.76.

not ordinary royal land grants, but rather documents pertaining to the sale of land. The procedure of purchase appears to be approximately the same in all of them.¹ We find in the Faridpur inscriptions (A and B) that the viṣaya of Vārakamaṇḍala was governed by viṣaya-patis, viz., Jajāva in plate A and Gopālasvāmin in B. These two officers, like the other viṣayapatis in the North Bengal inscriptions, were appointed to their posts by Governors who were favoured by the emperors. In the second record (B) it is mentioned that Nāgadeva, who had the two titles of mahāpratihāra and uparika, was in charge of the larger territorial division named Navyāvakāśikā. This was taken by Pargiter and Bhattasali as the provincial capital or the divisional headquarters. The local administrative office was the viṣayādhikaraṇa, where the chief secretary was known by the title of prathamakāyastha. N.K.Bhattasali conjectured that the ruins of Sabhar in the district of Dacca may be identified with Navyāvakaśikā, but we

Basak,
1. Hist. of North-Eastern India, Basak pp. 189ff.

have no solid evidence to prove this. Basak¹ says that the Vārakamaṇḍala-viṣaya must have been the district round about Kotalipāḍā in the present district of Faridpur. On the other hand, according to Pargiter² it should be connected with modern Barid, that is Barendra (Skt. Varendra), North Bengal. We think that the identification of Vārakamaṇḍala-viṣaya with Kotalipāḍā is more reasonable than with Barendra, because all the inscriptions are found in the Faridpur district.

We have only two gold coins of Samācaradeva,³ One, of the Rājallā type, ^{was} discovered in Jessore district, of Bengal. It was found along with a gold coin of Saśaṅka and another gold coin of the light-weight "Imitation Gupta" type, as well as silver coins of Candragupta II, Skandagupta and Kumāragupta.⁴ The provenance of the other coin is unknown. It is of the common "archer type" of the Gupta coins. The king's name occurs below the arm of the king, but V.A. Smith

1. Basak, op.cit. p.190.

2. IA., 1910, p.

3. JASB., 1923, NS., XIX, p.54ff; EI., XVIII, p.79f.

4. Allan, Gupta coins, Intro. Section 171; JASB., 1852, plate XII.

did not venture on a reading. A letter occurs between the feet of the king which Smith recognised as ca. The reverse legend he recognised with some hesitation as Narendra-vinata. On the Rājajīlā coin, he read the name of the king on the obverse as yamādha, written in characters of the close of the sixth century, and the reverse legend as Narendrāditya. Allan¹ in his Catalogue of Gupta Coins attributes the "archer type" coin to a period earlier than that of Śaśāṅka; and from the supplanting of the Garuḍa of the Guptas by the Bull standard on this coin,^{he} surmises that the coin was that of a devout Śaiva. The king's name he reads hesitatingly (Section 165) as Sahā or Samāca or Yamāca and thus wants to connect it with the Rājajīlā coin on which he reads the king's name as Yamādha. The reverse legend he reads on both the coins as Narendrāditya.

R.D.Banerji^{1a} discusses these two coins again, and after a careful study he comes to the conclusion that the name of the king on the obverse of both coins is the same,

1. Allan, *Intro.*, p. 1x1.

1^a. ASI., AR., 1913-14, p. 260.

20.

'yama'. The reverse legend is read as Narendravinata. N.K.Bhattachasali¹ also studies these two coins carefully. He says that the name of the king is the same on both the coins, and that "it cannot be read as anything else than Samācā." He maintains that this reading is confirmed by the copper plate inscription of Samācāradeva which was found at Ghugrāhāti, which is not very far from Muhammadpur, the find-spot of the Rājallīlā coin, and the lettering of whose name, as written on his copper plate, closely agrees with the lettering on these coins. The coins may therefore, be assigned to the Samācāradeva of the Ghugrāhāti plate.

R.C.Majumdar² is inclined to accept the view of Smith and Allan and further points out that Samācāradeva took the title Narendrāditya in imitation of the Gupta kings. If the reading Narendravinīta is accepted it should be interpreted as fully subdued or obedient to Narendra (i.e. Śaśaṅka). R.C.Majumdar believes on the

1. JASB., NS., XIX, 1923, p.N.55.

2. HB., I, P.52, fn.1.

strength of a ^{variant reading} ~~reference~~ in the Harṣacarita¹ that this Narendra is none other than Śaśāṅka. He thus suggests that Samācāradeva was a later contemporary of this king. But we cannot place Samācāradeva after Śaśāṅka. On palaeographic grounds he must be placed earlier than Śaśāṅka, and moreover there is no room for Samācāradeva in chronology after Śaśāṅka, whose immediate successors in Eastern India were first Harṣa and then Adityasena and his descendants.

The bull standard of these coins indicates that the king Samācāradeva was a Śaiva. We know as yet nothing of any successor of Samācāradeva in the kingdom of East Bengal.

The grants by these kings, Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva, give interesting details about provincial administration. All the records establish beyond doubt that there was a free, powerful and firmly fixed government in Bengal, which appears to have brought peace, happiness and prosperity to the people.

1. ~~Harṣacarita~~ Bühler, E. I. Vol. I. p. 70

How and when this independent kingdom of Vaṅga came to an end is not known to us. We know from the Mahākūṭa inscription¹ that the Cālukya king Kīrtivarman claimed to have conquered, among other countries Vaṅga, Aṅga, Kalinga and Magadha. As Kīrtivarman ceased to reign in A.D.597-98, his conquests in Bengal may be placed in the last quarter of the sixth century A.D. The nature and extent of Kīrtivarman's success are not known, but it might have had some effect on the break-up of the kingdom of Vaṅga. It is also not unlikely that the rise of the Later Guptas and of the kingdom of Gauḍa under Śaśaṅka gave a final death-blow to the independent kingdom of Vaṅga. This point will be discussed in the following chapter.

It should be remembered that after the reign of Samācāradeva, who ruled in Eastern Bengal, we know very little about the history of this region till the rise of the Khadga dynasty. Dharmāditya, Copacandra and Samācāradeva may be referred, according to our chronology, to the period

1. IA., vol.XIX, p.7.

A.D. 544-595. A large number of gold coins - crude and debased imitations of the Gupta type - found in different parts of Eastern Bengal prove the existence of other kings in this locality who evidently ruled later. Of the kings who issued these coins, the names of only two can be read with some degree of certainty, Prithuvīra and Sudhanyāditya.¹ All of the coins may be referred to the sixth and seventh centuries A.D.; but we have no evidence that the two kings whose names can be read belonged to any of the older dynasties of the region. Nor can we say how far the kingdom was affected by the allegedly victorious campaigns of the Cālukya king Kīrtivarman.

It is difficult to establish any link between the kings of the Faridpur plates and those of the Khadga dynasty, mentioned in the Āshrafpur² grants and the Deulbariē bronze image inscription.³ The Khadgas were the local

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1. JASB., NS., XIX, pp. N. 58ff; Altekar, The coinage of the Gupta Empire, p. 335.
 2. MASB; vol. I, pp. 85-91; Basak, op. cit; p. 193.
 3. EI., XVII, pp. 357ff (1923-24);

kings of Samatata. In our opinion the Khadga dynasty of four rulers reigned during the last ~~the~~ three quarters of the 7th century A.D., and cannot have survived long after the first quarter of the eighth century. This point will be further discussed in connection with the history of the Khadgas.

CHAPTER VI

The Rise of Gauḍa under Śaśāṅka.

As we have mentioned before, the northern part of Western Bengal and the whole of Northern Bengal were not included within the dominions of Gopacandra and his successors. From about this period these territories came to be known as the kingdom of Gauḍa, though this geographical term sometimes comprised the whole of western Bengal.¹ The Br̥hat Samhitā of Varāhamihira² (sixth century A.D.) clearly states Gauḍaka to be a part of Bengal, distinguished not only from Puṇḍra (North Bengal) Tāmraliptika (Tamluk) Vāṅga and Samatāṭa (central and eastern Bengal), but also from Vardhamāna (Burdwan). But the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa³ defines Gauḍa as a territory lying to the north of Burdwan and south of the Padmā. Although the actual political boundaries varied in different times, in our period Gauḍa roughly comprised northern and the whole or part

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1. HB., I, p. 55.

2. SBE., XIV, 6-8.

3. IA., 1891, p. 419f.

of western Bengal. For several centuries the city of Gauḍa was one of the most important cities of Bengal; but today it is represented by a thinly populated area in the district of Malda, mostly covered with woods and unhealthy swamps.¹

Before, considering the history of Gauḍa under Śaśāṅka, we must discuss the political condition of north Bengal from the decline of the Gupta empire to the rise of Śaśāṅka.

Scholars² ^{believe} ~~hold~~ that the hold of the Imperial Guptas was far stronger over Gauḍa than over Vaṅga or Samatāta. Some have held that Vaṅga regained its independence sometime in the beginning of the sixth century A.D., after the reign of Vainya Gupta (c.A.D. 507). But we have rejected this view. According to our scheme of chronology after Vainya Gupta, Narasiṃha Gupta and his son and successor were ruling over Vaṅga and North Bengal. There is no doubt that the power of the Imperial Guptas survived till c.A.D. 543-44, as is proved by the fifth Dāmodarpur copper plate. But

1. On Gaur, see CASR., Vol. XV, pp. 41ff.

2. EI., XV, No. 5, p. 141ff; Date corrected in EI., XVII, p. 193.

after this date we know nothing about the activities of the Imperial Guptas in Northern Bengal. It appears that this is the last Imperial Gupta record in that region and indeed in the whole of India. It is thus difficult to say when the Imperial Guptas lost their last stronghold. There is no doubt that the rise of the Maukharis and the Later Guptas was one of the main causes of their disintegration in Eastern India. The Maukharis and the Later Guptas were at first feudatories of the Gupta empire and rose in importance during the first half of the sixth century A.D.¹ Īṣāṇavarman, the son of Īśvaravarman, was the first Maukhari king to assume the title Mahārājādhirāja and to issue coins. These facts show that he set up an independent kingdom after the fall of the Imperial Guptas. As all the inscriptions of the ^{main} family, other than those on small seals and coins, have been found within the limits of the modern province of U.P., we may regard it as the probable seat of their power. Kanauj seems to have been the capital of the Maukhari kingdom, at least in the time of Avantivarman and his son, but we

1. The Classical Age, p. 68, 72; Vākātaka Gupta Age, pp. 189, ff.

have no absolutely certain evidence of this.¹ The only known date of Īṣāṇavarman is A.D. 554,² and thus his rise to power almost coincides with the downfall of the Gupta empire. We learn from the Haraha inscription of A.D. 554 that Īṣāṇavarman forced the Gauḍa people to seek refuge on the sea-coast,³ and he is said to have defeated the Gauḍas, the Andhras and the Śulīkas. The Gauḍas were certainly the people of Northern Bengal.⁴

The Later Guptas, who rose to power about the same time in the same circumstances, challenged the Maukharis, and it seems that they also declared their independence, perhaps in Malwa,⁵ at about the same time as the Maukharis did. An inscription⁶ found at Aphaṣṭ near Gaya mentions eight kings of the Later Gupta dynasty. They were known as nrpa (king) and were not given any

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1. The story of Rājyaśrī, as narrated by Bāṇa, makes it highly probable that Kanauj was the capital of her kingdom. The same conclusion follows from Hsüan Tsang's story of Harṣavardhana. The whole question has been discussed by Tripathi (Kanauj, pp. 32-35).
 2. EP. Ind., vol. XIV, p. 117.
 3. EI., XIV, 11 Off.
 4. Vākātaka-Gupta Age, p. 189.
 5. CA., p. 72.
 6. CII., III, p. 200.

other royal title. The first king of this dynasty was named Kṛṣṇa Gupta. We do not know who was the first independent king of the Later Gupta dynasty. The Aphaṣṭ inscription states in general terms the military achievements of the first three kings (Kṛṣṇa Gupta, Harṣa Gupta and Jīviṭa Gupta). King Jīviṭa Gupta is said to have carried his arms to the Himālayas and to the sea. But we do not know whether these campaigns were undertaken by the Later Guptas as feudatories on behalf of their suzerains or as independent chiefs.

The Aphaṣṭ inscription describes in more detail the reign of King Kumāra Gupta. He is said to have defeated the Maukhari king Īṣānavarman, who is described as 'a very moon of kings'. According to the Aphaṣṭ inscription Kumāra Gupta advanced up to Prayāga where he died, and his son Dāmodara Gupta again defeated the Maukharis, though he was probably killed or was seriously injured in the battle.¹

1. Dāmōdaraguptō=bhut=tanayas=tasya bhūpateḥ | yena Dāmodareṇ = ēva Daityā iva hata dviṣṭaḥ || yō Maukharēḥ Samitiṣṭh = ūddha-ta-Hūṇa-Sainya valgaḍ-ghaṭā vighatayann-uru-vāraṇānām | Sammūrckhitaḥ sura-vandhu(dhū)r = varayaṇ(n) mam = ēti tat-pāṇ(i)-paṅkaja-sukha-sparsād-vivu(bu)ddhaḥ. CII., (verses 8-9) p.203.
Fleet's translation of the passage, conveying the idea
footnote contd. overleaf...

R.C.Majumdar¹ suggests that, from the time of Kumāra Gupta, the Later Guptas had to all intents and purposes assumed an independent position, and he thinks that Kumāra Gupta set himself up as an independent king after A.D. 543. But we cannot say with certainty whether Kumāra Gupta was the first independent king, though there is no doubt that by this time the Later Gupta kings had much increased in power.

Mahāsena Gupta, the son of Dāmodara Gupta, claims to have defeated Susthitavarman the king of Kāmarūpa on the banks of the Lauhitya or the Brahmaputra river.² It appears that the Later Guptas by that time

footnote contd. from previous page....

that the king died in the fight, is generally accepted. K.C. Chattopadhyaya, however, argues that the passage does not mention his death, but only speaks of his swoon and of his subsequent awakening (D.R. Bhandarkar Volume, pp. 181ff). He also points out that the inscription refers to the victory and not to the defeat of Dāmodara Gupta, as supposed by R.G. Basak (HNEI, p. 123). However, the verse appears to refer to his choosing the apsarases as his own, and awakening at the touch of their hands and this would suggest that he did.

1. The Classical Age, p. 72.
2. Aḥṣad Inscription, II, 10-11. CII, III, 203, 206. The text is not quite explicit on the location of his victory, but the statement that his praise was sung by siddhas on the banks of the Lauhitya on account of his victory over Susthitavarman strongly suggests that this was the site of the battle, for there would be little point in the reference to the river if the battle had not taken place in its vicinity.

had firmly established themselves in the eastern parts of the old Gupta empire, though there was a long-drawn out struggle between the Later Guptas and the Maukharis, probably for the possession of North Bengal and Magadha. But fortune was more favourable to the Later Gupta king, Mahāsena Gupta, who carried his arms up to the Brahmaputra river. Mahāsena Gupta flourished towards the close of the sixth century A.D.¹

Probably the suzerainty of Mahāsena Gupta over Magadha and Northern Bengal continued for some time. We have no evidence of any independent ruler of Gauḍa before the end of the sixth century, and the first known independent king was Śaśāṅka who flourished in the seventh century.²

The exact political condition of Gauḍa during this period is difficult to determine. We do not know whether the Later Guptas were directly ruling the territory. Most probably it was ruled by local chiefs who acknowledged their supremacy. But by the beginning of the seventh

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1. He was the contemporary of the Kāmarūpa, King Susthitavarman, who was the elder brother of Bhāṣkaravarman, the contemporary of Harṣa, and thus must have flourished towards the close of the sixth century (Basak HNEI, p. 219)
 2. HB., I, p. 56.

century, Gauḍa became an independent kingdom under Śaśāṅka, and Magadha also formed a part of his dominions. It is believed that Mahāsenā Gupta was defeated by the Kalacuri king Buddharāja, who conquered Ujjain.¹ In these circumstances Mahāsenā Gupta and his two sons Kumāra Gupta and Mādhava Gupta were compelled to take shelter in the court of Prabhākaravardhana of Sthānvīśvara, whose mother Mahāsenā Guptā may have been a sister of Mahāsenā Gupta. Now whether Malwa was the original home or the centre of the Later Guptas from Kṛṣṇa Gupta to Mādhavagupta is a matter of dispute. There is no doubt on the fact that from Ādityasena down to Jīvitagupta II Magadha was the centre of their activities. This is clear from the provenance of the inscriptions of Ādityasena, Viṣṇugupta and Jīvitagupta II, all of which have been found in Magadha. This leads to a strong presumption that Ādityasena's predecessors also ruled there. Fleet² refers to them as the Guptas of Magadha. But many scholars find it difficult to believe that the line of Kṛṣṇa Gupta from the very beginning

1. EP., Ind. IX, pp. 296ff.

2. CII., III, p. 14.

ruled in Magadha. Hoernle¹ regards them as belonging to a branch of the imperial Gupta family, ruling in Eastern Malwa. C.V.Vaidya² thinks that the family ruled in Malwa at Ujjain until Deva Gupta, the contemporary of Rājyavardhana of Sthanvīśvara, was killed in battle with him and the kingdom was seized by Harṣa in 606 A.D. R.K.Mukherji³ is also of the same opinion. H.C.Raychaudhuri holds that Malwa was ruled by the Gupta dynasty, and that in the time of Ādityasena Magadha replaced Eastern Malwa as the chief centre of Gupta power.⁴

The theory of the Eastern Malwa origin of the Later Guptas is based on the identification of Mādhava Gupta of the Aphaṣa inscription⁵ with Mādhava Gupta of the Harṣacarita of Bāṇa.⁶ On the ground that Mādhava Gupta of the Harṣacarita, the son of Mahāsenagupta, was a constant companion of Harṣa, and Mādhava Gupta of the Aphaṣa inscription was "desirous of the company of Harṣa",

1. JRAS., 1903, p. 551ff.

2. HMHI, p. 24.

3. Harṣa, pp. 53ff.

4. PHAI, 4th ed. pp. 492-93.

5. CII., III, No. 42 pp. 205ff.

6. Harṣacarita (CT) p. 119. Bāṇa says that Kumāra Gupta and Mādhava Gupta were the sons of a Mālava king.

Hoernle¹ suggested that they were identical. He has been followed by most scholars, including C.V.Vaidya, R.K.Mukherjee, H.C.Raychaudhuri and others. R.D. Banerji was the only scholar to throw doubts on this identification,² and he controverted these views and tried to establish the older theory that the Later Guptas originally ruled in Magadha. R.D.Banerji's views have been challenged by R.K.Mukherjee³ and H.C.Raychaudhuri.⁴ R.K.Mukherjee refers to this family as "the Guptas of Eastern Malwa, an offshoot of the old Imperial Gupta house".⁵ He says also, "we hear no longer of the Guptas in Malwa till we come to King Mahāsenagupta and his predecessors ruling its eastern parts."⁶

The main arguments of R.D.Banerji are, firstly, that Mahāsenā Gupta of the Aphaṣṭ inscription, father of Mādhava Gupta, the associate of Harṣa, could not have

1. cf. D.K.M. p.134, quoting IRAS, 1904, Prof. Sinha's reference is wrong, and
2. JBORS, XIV, pp. 254 ff. We are unable to trace Hoernle's original statement.
3. JBORS, XV, p. 251 ff.
4. Ibid., p. 651 ff.
5. Harṣa, p. 60.
6. Ibid., p. 67.

been a king of East Mālawa, and secondly, that Susthitavarman whose defeat at the hands of Mahāsenā Gupta, on the Lauhitya, is mentioned in the Aphaṣa inscription, was not a Maukhari, but a king of Kāmarūpa. Some scholars believed that Susthitavarman was a Maukhari. Fleet¹, Thomas,² R.K. Mukherjee³ and Vaidya⁴ held this view; But the discovery of the Nidhānpur copper plates⁵ of Bhāskaravarman, king of Kāmarūpa, and his Nālandā seal,⁶ and a comparison of them with the date of the Harṣacarita,⁷ make it clear that the Susthitavarman, defeated by Mahāsenā Gupta was not a Maukhari king but a king of Kāmarūpa. There is now complete unanimity on this point.⁸ But Raychaudhuri⁹ observes that the victory of Mahāsenā Gupta over Susthitavarman of Kāmarūpa in no way proves that Mahāsenā Gupta could not be a king of Malwa. A ruler of Malwa, Yaśodharman, ^{claimed to have} had extended his conquests

1. CII., III, p. 15.
2. Harṣacarita (trans.) Prefaces, p. xi, Note 3.
3. Harṣa, p. 55, note 2.
4. HMHI, p. 37.
5. EP. Ind., XII, pp. 62.
6. MAI, No. 66, p. 69; JBORS., V, pp. 302ff; VI, pp. 151.
7. HC., (trans), p. 217.
8. PHAI., 3rd ed. p. 408; JBORS., XV, pp. 651ff; HB., I, pp. 56-57; TK., pp. 47-49; JBORS., XIV, pp. 257ff; JBORS., XV, pp. 651 ff.
9. JBORS., XV, p. 653.

up to the Lauhitya.¹ So the scholar suggests that another king of Malwa, Mahāsena Gupta, could have won a victory on the banks of the same river. This seems quite a reasonable suggestion.

Hence we conclude that after the downfall of the Imperial Guptas the Later Gupta king of Malwa, Mahāsena Gupta, tried to establish himself as an emperor of Magadha and to revive the past glory of the Guptas. But he could not establish his suzerainty over Magadha for long. The rise of Śaśāṅka of Gauḍa forced him to turn back to his original homeland, Malwa. The testimony of Hsüan Tsang, who states that Śaśāṅka had "recently" cut down the Bodhi Tree of Gaya, strongly suggests that as long as Śaśāṅka was alive Magadha was under his control and that after his death Harṣa became its ruler. Most probably, after the death of Harṣa, Mādhava Gupta, the son of Mahāsena Gupta, became the ruler of Magadha, and his descendants ~~and~~ ruled ^{there} successively.

Another factor that should be considered in this

1. CII., III, p. 146.

respect is the campaigns of Kīrtivarman, the Cālukya king who claims to have conquered Vaṅga, Āṅga and Magadha,¹ and this also may have weakened the power of the Later Guptas in Gauḍa and Magadha. It is possible that Śaśāṅka took advantage of these defeats to establish an independent kingdom in Gauḍa. But the effects of these important factors on the political history of Bengal are difficult to determine because of the paucity of definite data.

There is no doubt, however, that Śaśāṅka has an important place in the history of Bengal. He is the first known king of Bengal to extend his suzerainty over territories far beyond the geographical boundaries of that province.

The lineage and the early history of Śaśāṅka are very obscure, and therefore have been the subject of numerous suggestions. Of the early life of Śaśāṅka and the circumstances in which he occupied the throne of Gauḍa, we do not have any definite evidence. A seal matrix cut in the rock of the fort, of Rohtasgarh records the name of Śrī Mahāsāmanta Śaśāṅka, "the

1. IA., XIX, 7. The Mahākūṭa inscription.

illustrious great vassal Śaśāṅka".¹ It is generally held that this Śaśāṅka is identical with Śaśāṅka, king of Gauḍa. If his identity is to be accepted, it would follow that he began his life as a subordinate ruler. But the question as to who was his overlord is a matter of controversy. According to D.C.Ganguly, the Deo-Baranark inscription, "definitely settles that Śaśāṅka was a feudatory of Avantivarman and probably for a short period of his son Grahavarman".² His fundamental assumption that the Maukhari King Avantivarman was in possession of Magadha throughout his reign lacks any evidence. There is no doubt that there was a constant struggle between the Later Guptas and the Maukharis for the possession of Gauḍa and Magadha, and victory went alternately to either side. It seems that neither party could claim any decisive success. So the theory that Śaśāṅka was originally a subordinate vassal of the Maukharis, though not improbable, is not supported by any convincing evidence.

1. CII., III, p. 284.

2. IHQ., XII, p. 457.

Some scholars have tried to connect Śaśāṅka with the Guptas: Vidyavinoda takes him to be the son of Mahāsena Gupta.¹ But in this case it is strange that the Aphaṣṭ inscription of Ādityasena, the grandson of Mahāsena Gupta, makes no mention of Śaśāṅka. R.D.Banerji² suspected that he belonged to the Gupta dynasty of Magadha, and that both he and Deva Gupta of Malwa tried to restore the prestige of the Guptas immediately after the death of Prabhākaravardhana. The similarity in weight, fabric and provenance of the coins of Śaśāṅka and those of the Later imperial Guptas such as Kumāra Gupta III, led R.D.Banerjee to this conclusion. But it has no real basis. Moreover, the alliance between Deva Gupta and Śaśāṅka against their common enemies, the Maukharis and the Vardhanas, need not suggest any blood connection between them. Similarly the resemblance in the style and provenance of their coins does not prove any family relationship between the Guptas and Śaśāṅka. On the same grounds Bhattasali connects Śaśāṅka with Samācāradeva.³ In

1. Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali p.15 (intro.)
2. Hist. of Orissa, I, p.129.
3. JASB,(NS),XIX.Num.Sup.p.54 N ff.

this respect the Rohtāsgarh seal matrix does not give evidence of any connection between Śasāṅka and Mahā-sena Gupta or the imperial Guptas. The coins of Śasāṅka have the symbol of a Nandīdhvaja instead of a Garuḍadhvaja, as usually found on the Gupta coins. If Śasāṅka had any blood connection with either the imperial or the later Guptas the fact would not have been missed in the inscriptions. No relationship of Śasāṅka is mentioned in the Harṣacarita though it refers to the King of Gauḍa on many occasions. Hsüan Tsang has described him as the "recent" king of Karnaśuvārṇa. A commentator on the Harṣacarita has also given the Gauḍādhīpa the same name, but Bühler¹ mentioned that in one manuscript of Harṣacarita the name of the Gauḍa king is stated as Narendra Gupta. Fitzedward Hall expressed his opinion that the king was a descendant of the Gupta family (whether Imperial or Later, not being mentioned)^{1a}. Raychaudhuri² rightly remarks that, "there is no reason to believe that Śasāṅka belonged to the Gupta family, even if he had

1. EI., vol. I, p. 70. 1a. cf. H.N.E.I. p. 137.

2. PHAI, (4th ed.) p. 514, fn. 3.

a secondary name, Narendra Gupta". In fact, we have wondered whether Śaśāṅka ever called himself Narendra Gupta, though he is referred to as Narendra or Narendrāditya on some of his coins. The testimony of a single variant manuscript of late date is hardly enough to prove this. K.L.Barua¹ comes to the same conclusion. He adds another reason that as Śaśāṅka was a persecutor of Buddhism he could not belong to the Gupta dynasty, which was followed a policy of religious toleration.

Bhattacharya's suggestion that Śaśāṅka was the son and successor of Mahārādhirāja Samācāradeva is equally unacceptable. His theory is based on the following arguments. (a) A Rājātilā type of coin of Samācāradeva was found in Jessore with a gold coin of Śaśāṅka,² (b) both Samācāradeva and Śaśāṅka were Śaivas and have the bull on their coins, and (c) Allan holds that the coins which have Narendrāditya on the reverse are earlier than those of Śaśāṅka. But all these grounds are weak and untenable. With a coin of Śaśāṅka and the Rājātilā type coin of Samācāradeva were also found the coins of Candragupta II, Kumāragupta I and Skandagupta.

1. Early History of Kāmarūpa, p.60.

2. CCGDBM, Intro. p. cxxvii.

Gupta.¹

The most serious objection against the theories that connect Śaśāṅka with the Guptas or Samācāradeva is that Śaśāṅka was a ruler of Gauḍa. In the Harṣacarita he is referred to as Gauḍādhipa, Gauḍādharma and duṣṭagaḍabhujaṅga.² But neither the Guptas nor Samācāradeva are ever referred to as Gauḍas in the inscriptions. Moreover, Samācāradeva was a ruler of Eastern Bengal, while on the other hand Śaśāṅka was a ruler of Gauḍa. It is not even known whether Eastern Bengal was included within the dominion of Śaśāṅka.

Another view is that Samācāradeva was a feudatory of Śaśāṅka³. This is also untenable. It rests upon the very doubtful reading Śrī Narendravinata on the reverse of a coin described by V.A. Smith.⁴ Smith said that the three letters following Narendra "look like vinata" but Allan⁵ has read the legend as Narendrāditya, and the legend on the reverse of another type of coin of Samācāradeva has been read with certainty by both Smith⁶ and Allan⁷ as Narendrāditya. R.D. Banerji,⁸ on the

1. CCGDBM, p. cxxvii.

2. HC., (trans.) pp. 187, 188, 192.

3. IC., IV, 225.

4. IMC., I, 120, pl. XVI, II.

5. CCGDBM, 149.

6. IMC., I, 122.

7. CCGDBM, 150.

8. ASI., 1913-14., p. 260.

other hand, read the legend in both cases as Narendravinata, and held that it cannot be anything else. R.C.Majumdar¹ has rejected this reading in favour of Narendrāditya and he holds that Samācāradeva assumed this title in imitation of the Gupta kings.

R.C.Majumdar suspected some relationship between Śaśāṅka and the Māna chiefs,² but there is no real basis for this speculation. The opinion of Gosavi³ is also purely imaginative; he holds that, as there is a Mrgāṅka in the Varman dynasty of Kāmarūpa, Śaśāṅka may have been a prince of the same dynasty. An argument based solely on the resemblance of names hardly needs any comment at all. Some scholars⁴ also try to trace a relationship between Jayanāga and Śaśāṅka. According to Basak and Dr. Barnett, Jayanāga was the predecessor of Śaśāṅka. Their arguments are based solely on the Vappaghoṣavāta⁵ grant of Jayanāga, which was issued by him from Karnaśuvārṇa, and the similarity of the coins

1. HB., I, p. 52.

2. JAHS., X, pp. 1ff.

3. JAHS., II, p. 12.

4. EP. Ind., XVIII, pp. 60ff; HNEI., p. 138ff; Decline of the kingdom of Magadha, p. 229.

5. EI., XVIII, pp. 60ff.

of Śaśāṅka and Jayanāga.¹ B.P.Sinha^{1a} further argues that Śaśāṅka is compared to a serpent by Bāṇa in the Harṣa-carita, thus further suggesting his connection with the Nāgas.

All these points do not seem to be strong enough to establish a blood relationship between Jayanāga and Śaśāṅka. It is true that both Jayanāga and Śaśāṅka were the rulers of Karnaśuvārṇa. But we still do not know what their relationship was. They may have been different kings altogether. Resemblance of coins cannot establish any blood relationship. Imperial Gupta^{silver} coins were copied by the Later Gupta kings and others, but this does not prove their relationship. Moreover B.P.Sinha's argument is not at all tenable. Vilest of Gauḍa, (gauḍādhama), the Gauḍa serpent, (gauḍabhujāṅga) etc., are contemptuous epithets attributed to Śaśāṅka by Bāṇa; these are mere words and are purported to be expressed in anger. On the basis of these emotional expressions we cannot establish any relationship. On the other hand, the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa² makes Jayanāga almost

1. CEG., pp.33 Off. 1a. p.km. p.229.

2. IHI, p.51, MMK., Text p.55, v.749-750.

a successor of Śaśāṅka. It appears to us that from the palaeographical point of view the grant of Jayanāga is much later than the latter half of the sixth century A.D.¹ We have therefore concluded that Jayanāga became a ruler of Gauḍa after Śaśāṅka. B.P. Sinha suggests that "Śaśāṅka was appointed as Mahāsāmanta of Magadha by Jayanāga, who extended his authority over Magadha".² From the evidence of the MañjuśrīMūlakalpa and of the palaeography of his inscriptions his suggestion does not seem probable.

As we have noticed in the middle of the sixth century A.D., the Later Guptas rose to power. It would be more reasonable if we take Mahāsenagupta, the Later Gupta king, who flourished towards the end of the sixth century A.D., as the overlord of Śaśāṅka, and it is also possible that after the death of Mahāsenagupta Śaśāṅka set himself up as an independent ruler of Gauḍa. After the death of Śaśāṅka there was chaos and confusion in Bengal and it seems that during this troubled period Jayanāga declared himself the independent ruler of Gauḍa and assumed imperial titles. But it is difficult to

1. EI., XVIII, p. 61.

2. DKM., p. 233.

determine how long he reigned. This point will be discussed in the next chapter.

So we can only conclude that the origin of Śaśāṅka is still obscure. Because of the paucity of materials, it is difficult to determine anything definitely about his ancestry.

Again, owing to lack of materials at our disposal, it is impossible to describe in detail the exact course of events which led to Śaśāṅka's accession to the Gauḍa empire. How he made himself master of Gauḍa we do not know. It is very unfortunate that he did not have a sympathetic literary man at his court who might have painted his life in bright colours as Hsüan Tsang and Bāṇabhaṭṭa did for Harṣa. On the contrary his character may have been blackened by the statements of those prejudiced writers.

Śaśāṅka was one of the great figures in the political history of Bengal and he ruled over a vast territory. This is indirectly indicated by Bāṇa, Hsüan Tsang and the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa. But the date of his accession to the throne of Gauḍa is not known. He was a contemporary of Mahāśena Gupta, who became prominent towards the end of sixth century, as we have

noticed already. It seems that Śaśāṅka rose to power at the beginning of the seventh century and made himself master of the countries of Daṇḍabhukti (Midnāpore district) Utkala, (North Orissa) and Ganjām. We learn, from the accounts of Hsüan Tsang,¹ that Śaśāṅka cut down the Bodhi Tree and attempted to remove the image of Buddha at Bodh Gaya and to replace it by one of Śiva. It appears that he had also strong control over Magadha and ruled almost the whole of Bengal before his conquest of Kanauj after the death of Grahavarman. It is quite clear that he was at the height of his power by 606, the date of Harṣavardhana's accession.

Conquests of Śaśāṅka.

The chief centre of Śaśāṅka's activities was Gauḍa, as is clear from accounts of Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Hsüan Tsang. Though we do not know the exact events of his accession to the throne of Gauḍa, it seems possible that, taking advantage of the death of his overlord, Mahāsenā Gupta, and the weakness of the latter's minor son Mādhava Gupta, Śaśāṅka proclaimed himself as

1. Watters, On Yuang Chwang, II, pp. 115-116.

independent king of Gauḍa.

There is little doubt that, sometime before A.D. 606, Śaśāṅka became the king of Gauḍa with his capital at Kārṇasuvarṇa, which has been identified with Rāṅgāmāti, six miles south-west of Berhampur in the Murshidabad district.¹

There is no doubt that both Northern and Western Bengal, were included in the dominions of Śaśāṅka. Whether the Southern and Eastern parts were included cannot be said definitely. We have no positive evidence, whether he led any invasion against these regions. Most probably these parts of Bengal constituted an independent state in the first half of the seventh century A.D. We have indirect evidence of this from the account of Hsüan Tsang, who said that Śīlabhadra, the Buddhist patriarch of Nālandā, was a scion of the Brāhmanical royal family of Samatāṭa². P.L.Paul³ was inclined to the view that a

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1. This view, propounded by Beveridge (JASB., 1893, pp. 315, 3-28), is now generally accepted.
 2. Watters, II, p. 109.
 3. IC., II, pp. 795ff.

Bhadra dynasty ruled there. But we cannot say anything definite about this, because Śīlabhadra may have changed his original name after his initiation into Buddhism, ^{when he} ~~and~~ took this new name Śīlabhadra (virtuous in his conduct).

Whatever may have been the extent of his rule in Bengal, Śaśāṅka extended his suzerainty as far south as Chilka Lake in Orissa. Sometime before the rise of Śaśāṅka, the Śailodbhava dynasty rose to power after the decline of the Guptas and ruled over Kōṅgoda or Orissa. At the same time the Māna dynasty had established a kingdom in the hilly regions between Midnapore and Gaya districts. The relations between these two dynasties cannot be determined.

The rise of the Mānā family is recorded in an inscription¹ found in the Hazaribagh district. It is said that the three brothers, Udayamāna, Sridhantamāna and Ajitamāna were all merchants and went on business from Ayodhyā to Tāmralipti. After having made a large fortune, on their way home they stayed for some time at a village, probably situated in the

1. EI., vol. II, pp. 343ff.

district where the inscription was found. Through the favour of Ādisiṃha, the King of Magadha, to whom this region belonged, Udayamāna became the ruler of the village, and his two brothers were appointed by him as subordinate rulers over two other neighbouring villages. Thus there grew up a small principality in the hilly region between Gayā and Midnapore districts. The date of its foundation is unknown, but many generations had ruled after Udayamāna when this traditional account was drawn up, and it is probable that these events took place sometime after the fall of the Guptas. The identification of Ādisiṃha is impossible, since we have no reference to him in any other source. It may be that he was himself a comparatively small king, tributary to the Later Guptas.

In the last quarter of the sixth century A.D., a Māna dynasty, which may be identical with the above, was ruling over the greater part of Orissa.

We learn from two records, the Patiākella Grant¹ dated 283 (A.D. 602-3) and the Soro Plate A, dated 260² (A.D. 579-80), that a ruler named Śambhūyaśas was ruling

1. EP. Ind., IX., p. 285.

2. EP. Ind., XXIII., p. 198.

South Tosālī during the reign of the Māna dynasty (Mānavamśa-rājya-kāle). But whether Śambhūyaśas himself was the suzerain ruler belonging to this dynasty is not clearly stated. R.D. Banerji, who edited this record, observed that Śambhūyaśas is styled Paramamāheśvara Paramabhāṭṭāraka Paramadeva-tādhidāivata which clearly shows his imperial position. But it is to be remembered in this connection that the Soro plates B, C and D. use the phrase Parama-daivat-ādhidāivata-srī-paramabhāṭṭāraka-pād-ānudyātā without mentioning his name. But in the Soro plate A, the corresponding phrase is Parama-daivata-Vappa-pād-ānudyātā. This may indicate that Śambhūyaśas' father was his suzerain.

From the Ganjām plates¹ of Mādhavarāja II, dated in the Gupta year 300 (=619-20 A.D.), we know that Śaśāṅka was recognised as the Mahārājādhirāja in Koṅgodha (Ganjām) - maṇḍala at that time. There can be no doubt that the Mahārājādhirāja Śaśāṅka of the Ganjām plates was the same as the Śaśāṅka who killed Rājyavardhana. It is also clear from the record that

1. EL., VI, pp. 143ff.

the Sailodbhava King Mādhavarāja II was Śaśāṅka's feudatory. Most probably after the death of Śaśāṅka the Sailodbhavas again set up an independent kingdom. It is a matter of speculation whether Śaśāṅka controlled the modern districts of Balasore and Cuttack. B.C. Majumdar realised how difficult it was for Narendragupta (Śaśāṅka) to come "upon Puri without traversing the districts of Balasore and Cuttack", and that from his seat in Bengal he could not, "keep the Kongodha country under his rule when the northern portions of Orissa were under the rule of another house of rulers". To meet the difficulty he suggested that "Śaśāṅka may have swooped down upon Kongodha (Gaṅjām) through the road from Bengal to Puri through Dhalbhum and the hill tracts of Orissa."¹ Fortunately we are now in a position to state that he took the more convenient route from Bengal to Gaṅjām through the districts of Midnapore and Balasore. From the two copper plates of Śaśāṅka's time found in Midnapore² it is absolutely clear that Śaśāṅka was the master of Daṇḍabhukti and Utkala (Northern Orissa). The first copper plate records that when Śaśāṅka was ruling

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1. B.C. Majumdar - Orissa in the Making, pp. 110.
 2. JASB (Letters) XI., pp. 1ff.

his feudatory Sāmanta Mahārājā Śrī-Śomadatta was governing the province of Daṇḍabhukti joined to Utkaladēśa. The second plate records that when Śasāṅka was ruling Mahāpratihāra Śubhakīrtti was governing Daṇḍabhukti. The object of the first record is to register the donation of the village Mahā-kumbhārapadraka to Bhaṭṭeśvara and the purpose of the second record is to register the donation of some lands in the village Kumbhārapadraka, in the dēśa Ketakapadrika to Dāmyasvāmin. The donated lands, in both the inscriptions, were situated in the Tāvīra adhikaraṇa to which belong the seals attached to both the records. Tāvīra was evidently the administrative headquarters in Daṇḍabhukti, from which both grants were issued. R.C.Majumdar¹ is inclined to identify Tāvīra with Debra, about 15 miles south-east of Midnapore; the village Kumbhārapadraka is not identified by him.

Both plates are dated, but unfortunately the dates are very difficult to determine.

1. JASB., (Letters) XI., 1945, p. 7.

R.C.Majumdar¹ reads the year of the first plate as 309 or 19. According to him, if the former is the correct reading, it has to be referred to the Gupta era and the date would then be equivalent to A.D. 628; and if the latter is correct, it is to be regarded as the regnal year. He reads the year 8 on the second plate.

Two of the Soro plates² (B and C) record the grant of two villages by Mahā-Balādhikṛta Antarāṅga Mahā-Sāndhivigrahika Somadatta. These villages were situated in the Sarēphāhāra-ṣaṣaya in Uttara Tosālī; as N.G.Majumdar³ has pointed out, Uttara Tosālī included the Balasore district, and Sarephā is to be identified with Soro in the same district. As we find Somadatta of the Midnapur copper plate I was governing both Daṇḍabhukti and Utkala, the region comprising the southern part of Midnapur and the Balasore district must be regarded as within his jurisdiction.

R.C.Majumdar has proved correctly the identity

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1. JASB (Letters) XI., 1945, p.3.
 2. EI., XXIII, pp.199ff.
 3. Ibid., p.201.

of Somadatta of the Midnapore plate A and Somadatta of the Soro plates B and C. He has also rightly presumed that the unnamed suzerain of the latter plates was Śaśāṅka.¹ N.G.Majumdar,² on the basis of the difference in the palaeography between the Ganjām plates of Mādhavarāja II and the Soro plates, held that the Soro plates belong to an earlier period and their dates should be assigned to the Kalacuri era. But R.C.Majumdar³ has proved that the Soro plates (B and C) and the Midnapore plate A of the time of Śaśāṅka have the same palaeographic characteristics, and therefore ^{the} three plates belong to the same period. We also agree with R.C.Majumdar, but it seems that the akṣaras ya ka and na of the Soro plates B, C and D and ya ka and na of the Midnapore plates A and B have the same palaeographic characteristics, and so all these five plates could be placed to the same period. (see plate No.1). The date 260 on the Soro plate A may be read as in the Gupta era.⁴ Palaeographically the Soro

1. JASB., (Letters), XI, 1945, pp. 1ff.

2. EI., XXIII, p. 198.

3. JASB., (Letters), XI, p. 3.

4. EI., XXIII, pp. 197, ff.

Plate A, which shows earlier forms of letters than Soro plates B, C and D., should be placed first in the series, while plates B, C and D seem to come chronologically between A and the Ganjam plates. Palaeographically, the Soro plate A closely resembles the Patiākellā grant, dated 283 G.E. (A.D. 602).

As we know from the Patiākellā grant that Sambhūyaśas ruled in Northern Tosālī in the year 283 (A.D. 602), it may be presumed that he was defeated by Śaśāṅka. We have to assume that the conquest of Kōṅgoda by Śaśāṅka did not occur till some time after this date (A.D. 602). Most probably, the Southern campaigns of Śaśāṅka were finished before he set out for Kanauj about A.D. 606; and his conquest of Daṇḍabhukti, Utkala and Kōṅgoda may be placed between 260 9A.D. 579) and 283 (A.D. 602).

From the Soro plate D,¹ we learn that Mahāpratihāra Mahārājā Bhānudatta in the year 5 meditating on the feet of his suzerain, made grants of land to four Brāhmanas. This Bhānudatta has been identified with Mahāpratihāra Mahārāja Mahāsāmanta Bhānu of the Balasore

1. EI., XXIII, pp. 199ff.

copper plate inscription.¹ This is also dated in the year 5, and in it mention is made of the fact that the feudatory was meditating on the feet of the sovereign overlord (Paramabhaṭṭāraka). N.G.Majumdar, the editor of the Soro plates, opined that "there could be no difference of more than a generation between Bhānudatta and Somadatta".² R.C.Majumdar concluded that Somadatta was followed by Bhānudatta in the government of Uttara Tosālī on the grounds that the names of the two donees in the B and C plates reappear, along with two others, in the third (Plate D), and the name Āruṅgasvāmī of the former is changed to Āruṅgamitrasvāmī in the latter.³

Śaśāṅka not only freed Gauḍa from the domination of the Later Guptas, but also extended his suzerainty almost as far south as the Mahendragiri and Southern Tosālī, almost the whole of Orissa from Balasore to Puri district. From the Harṣacarita we learn that he was a king of Gauḍa and Hsüan Tsang expressly informs us that his capital was at Karnaśuvarṇa. His dominions

1. IHQ., XI, pp. 611ff; EP. Ind., XXVI., pp. 239ff.

2. EP. Ind., XXIII, pp. 197ff.

3. JASB., XI (Letters), p. 5.

included Magadha, as is clearly proved by the account of Hsüan Tsang, who mentions Śaśāṅka's activities in that region.¹ His seal matrix was found at Roṭasgarh.² His coins have been discovered at Nālandā³ and Gayā.⁴ A coin of Śaśāṅka was found with the Rājalīlā type coin of Narendrāditya (identified with Samācāradeva) at Muhammadpur, near Jessore.⁵ This may suggest that Śaśāṅka's authority extended even to the eastern parts of Bengal. But it may be pointed out that coins are very portable and it is very possible to find them in places which may have nothing to do with the issuer. The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa clearly associates Śaśāṅka with Puṇḍra.⁶ This is also confirmed by a set of copper plates of Bhāskara-varman of Assam at Dhoobi in the Kāmarūpa district, where we are told that a Gauḍa army crossed the Lauhitya⁷ into the Kāmarūpa country. This invasion

1. Watters, II, pp. 92, 114-15.

2. CII., III, pp. 283ff.

3. ASIAR., 1924-25, pp. 136ff.

4. CMI., (Cunningham) Pl. II, No. 5, p. 19.

5. The Coinage of the Gupta empire, Altekar, p. 326.

6. IHI., p. 50.

7. JARS., XI (1944), pp. 33ff.

of Kāmarūpa could easily have started from the city of Puṇḍravardhana which is not very far from the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) river.

In the above mentioned copper plates it is stated that the Gauda army which attacked Kāmarūpa was defeated. The inscription gives a clear description of the battle that occurred between the Bengal army (Gaudabala) on the one side and two Kāmarūpa princes, Supratiṣṭhitavarman and Bhāskara-varman on the other, and the record further states that the Bengal army was defeated at the hands of the two princes of Kāmarūpa who returned home victorious.¹ From these inscriptions it is clear also that it was not the Kāmarūpa army which had invaded Bengal, but it was Gauda king who led an invasion against Kāmarūpa. The inscriptions do not say anything that the victory led to any part of Bengal being occupied by the forces of Kāmarūpa. Therefore the war from the point of view of the Kāmarūpa dynasty was defensive. There is no doubt that this set of plates is earlier than the Nidhānpur copper plates of Bhāskaravarman,²

1. JARS., XI (1944), pp. 33ff.

2. EP. Ind., XII, p. 78.

wherein it is stated that he was in possession of Karnaśuvārṇa, once the capital of Śaśāṅka. The Gauda king who led this invasion against Kāmarūpa was almost certainly Śaśāṅka, whose war-like activities are well known.

From the Doobi Plates of Bhāskaravarman it is clear that after Susthitavarman his elder son Supratiṣṭhitavarman became King for a short time and Bhāskaravarman, the younger brother of Supratiṣṭhitavarman, ascended the throne after the death of his elder brother.

At the height of his power Śaśāṅka, from his capital at Karnaśuvārṇa ruled over much of Northern India, which included parts of the modern Uttar Pradesh, the whole of Bihar, Orissa, and a very large part of Bengal. The pseudo-prophetic statement of the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa¹ is that "Soma (Śaśāṅka) will rule over Gangetic valley up to Benares". "He, of wicked intellect, will destroy the beautiful image of the Buddha. He, of wicked intellect, enamoured of the words of the Tīrthikas,

1. IHI., p.49, Text. Jayaswal, 715-718.

will burn that great bridge of religion (Dharma), (as) prophesied by the former Jinas (Buddhas)."

According to Hsüan Tsang his power was felt in Kuśinagara,¹ where he is said to have exterminated the Buddhist monks. His influence in the political field of Northern India is also indirectly mentioned by Bāṇabhāṭṭa² who refers to the Śaśāṅkamaṇḍala.

The use of the word Maṇḍala or Circle is very significant. It means that he had continued the tradition of Kauṭilya's policy. In the light of the Arthaśāstra³ it would have the meaning of circle of states headed by Śaśāṅka. From the statement of Bāṇa it appears that Śaśāṅka was not a petty king of Gauḍa but a king at the head of a circle of vassal states. The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakaḥ also indicates that Śaśāṅka was already a great king before he met Rājyavardhana. About R. (Rājyavardhana) we are told that he would be "as powerful as Soma (Śaśāṅka)."⁴

1. Watters, II, p.43.

2. H. C., (trans.) App. B., p.275, n.168; p.279, n.216.

3. Kauṭilya, Bk. VII, Ch. II.

4. IHI, p.50.

Śaśāṅka, the Maukharis and the Puṣyabhūti.

The account of Śaśāṅka's military campaign against the Maukhari and Puṣyabhūti dynasties has been preserved by Bāṇa in his *Life of Harṣa*.

It is clear that between A.D. 602 and 605, Śaśāṅka established himself firmly over a large part of Northern India. It seems that his rapid rise on the political horizon aroused fear in the mind of the Maukhari king Grahavarman who made an alliance with the powerful Puṣyabhūti family of Sthāṇviśvara and married Rājyaśrī, the daughter of Prabhākaravardhana.¹ On the other hand it appears that Śaśāṅka made an alliance with Deva Gupta, King of Malwa against Grahavarman, the Maukhari ruler of Kanauj.

We have noticed already that the Maukharis had been enemies of Gaṇḍa since the time of Īśāṇavarman and that there had been a constant struggle between the Maukharis and the Later Guptas for generations. It seems that the matrimonial alliance between the Maukhari and the Vardhana families was brought about partly by

1. HC., pp. 122ff. (trans. by Cowell and Thomas.)

the rise of Śaśāṅka who formed a counter alliance with Deva Gupta of Malwa against their enemies - the Maukharis and the Puṣyabhūtiś.

It appears from Bāṇa's account of the message of Saṁvādaka, a servant of Rājyaśrī, that on the very day on which the death of Prabhākaravardhana was rumoured, Grahavarman, the King of Kanauj, was killed and his wife Rājyaśrī imprisoned at Kanauj by the "wicked lord of Malwa".¹ This account is supplemented by the statement attributed by Bāṇa to Bhaṇḍi, the cousin of Harṣavardhana. He said that he learnt from common people that after the death of Rājyavardhana and the capture of Kanauj by "the man named Gupta", Queen Rājyaśrī had escaped from prison and had fled to the Vindhya forest.²

From these statements it appears that Kanauj was seized after the death of Grahavarman and by Deva Gupta, who is known in the Harṣacarita as "the wicked lord of Malwa." Most probably, Kanauj was captured by Deva Gupta before the death of Rājyavardhana. Deva Gupta

1. H.C. (trans.) p.173.

2. Ibid., 224.

was perhaps waiting for Śaśāṅka to join him, and so he did not proceed towards Sthāṇvīśvara, though he was planning to invade it. But before Śaśāṅka's arrival, Rājyavardhana acted very rapidly. As soon as he heard the news of Grahavarman's assassination by Deva Gupta, he left Harṣa to take charge of Sthāṇvīśvara and started with his cousin Bhaṇḍi and ten thousand horsemen to "lay the royal house of Malwa in ruins".¹ His invasion was successful,² the Malwa King Deva Gupta was completely defeated, and thousands of elephants, ornaments of various kinds, beautiful women and vassals were captured by Rājyavardhana.³ From the Madhuban inscription of Harṣa we come to know that Rājyavardhana had defeated in battle "King Deva Gupta and others who resembled wicked horses".⁴ Thus it is clear that Deva Gupta was subdued by him and large booty fell into his hands. But it is not clearly stated in the Harṣacarita whether Deva Gupta lost his life in the battle.

1. HC., (trans.) p.175.

2. Ibid., p.178.

3. Ibid., p.225.

4. EP. Ind., I, p.74., (1892).

By this time Śaśāṅka appears to have occupied Kanauj, but Rājyaśrī managed to escape from prison "during the Gauda trouble".¹ It seems that before Śaśāṅka could join Deva Gupta, Rājyavardhana suddenly attacked him. It is also probable that while Deva Gupta was waiting for Śaśāṅka to join in an attack on Sthānviśvara, he was compelled to give battle to Rājyavardhana. Where the actual battle took place is not known, but it may have occurred in Malwa. After defeating Deva Gupta, Rājyavardhana proceeded towards Kanauj in order to release his sister Rājyaśrī, but before he could reach the place he must have met Śaśāṅka, who had already occupied Kanauj while he^(Rājyavardhana) was engaged in battle with Deva Gupta. A struggle between them was inevitable and the result of the conflict was fatal to Rājyavardhana, who was murdered by Śaśāṅka in A.D. 606, the date of Harṣa's accession.

The Śaśāṅka-Rājyavardhana episode has been discussed by many scholars and there is great controversy among them about the death of Rājyavardhana. Bāṇa says that "the Gauda King allured Rājyavardhana to

1. HC., (trans.) p.250.

confidence by false civilities and thus weaponless, confiding, and alone, he was despatched in his own quarters".¹ Hsüan Tsang's biography states that the king of Karnaśuvārṇa, in Eastern India, whose name was Śaśāṅka-rāja, hating the superior military talents of Rājyavardhana, made a plot and murdered him.² From the Si-yu-ki we learn that Śaśāṅka or his ministers called Rājyavardhana to a conference and murdered him.³ According to the Madhuban copper plate inscription of Harṣa, Rājyavardhana "in consequence of his adherence to a promise gave up his life".⁴ In view of these references, many scholars, such as C.V.Vaidya,⁵ Basak⁶ and Ganguli,⁷ believe that Śaśāṅka was guilty of foul play in his dealings with Rājyavardhana, who met his death through the treachery of the king of Gauḍa. But others such as R.C.Majumdar,⁸ R.P.Chanda⁹ and R.D.Banerji¹⁰

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1. HC., (trans.) p.178.
 2. The Life, p.83, (S.Beal).
 3. Records, I, p.210; Watters, On Yuan Chwang, I, p.343.
 4. EP.Ind., I, pp.73ff.
 5. HMH, I, p.36.
 6. HNEI, p.144.
 7. IHQ., XII, p.462.
 8. Hist. of Beng. I, pp.73-76.
 9. GR., pp.8-10.
 10. BI., pp.107ff.

have cast doubt on the story of Bāṇa and Hsüan Tsang. They point out that both authors were biased against Śaśāṅka, who was the enemy of their patron Harṣavardhana, whose character they painted in rosy colours. The same scholars point out also that it is difficult to believe that Rājyavardhana would attend the conference in the camp of his enemy without taking any precautions. In this respect we cannot absolutely ignore the accounts of Bāṇa and Hsüan Tsang, which must have some basis of fact in them. Reading between the lines of the various statements it appears that after the defeat of Deva Gupta, when Rājyavardhana was proceeding towards Kanauj, with his small army, he must have faced the vast army of Śaśāṅka, who had already encamped at Kanauj. Probably Śaśāṅka easily defeated Rājyavardhana's small army and after his defeat the latter fell into the hands of Śaśāṅka. The story reminds us of the famous incident of Śivājī and Āfsal Khan, when the latter was killed in a private conference. In this connection naturally the question arises - why did Rājyavardhana enter the enemy's camp without any precautions? If he did so, was he not a careless fool?

It does not seem to be believable that Rājyavardhana was so heedless. Bāṇa further says that the death of Rājyavardhana was due to his carelessness.¹ But even if Rājyavardhana was over confident this does not exonerate Śaśāṅka. The record of the contemporary sources is unanimous that Rājyavardhana met his death not in battle, but by foul play in the camp of his enemy. There seems no good reason to doubt that this is what happened, though we cannot reconstruct the details. It is possible that Rājyavardhana, defeated by Śaśāṅka, was compelled to enter Śaśāṅka's camp to arrange a truce, and there met his death by foul play.

Śaśāṅka neither succeeded to the throne of Sthāṇvīśvara nor did he establish his universal suzerainty in Kanauj.² He was afraid of an attack on his kingdom by Harṣavardhana, who accepted the kingship after Rājya's death.³ Harṣa, bent on avenging his brother's murder, started with a vast army against Śaśāṅka, and he issued a proclamation through his Minister of Peace and War

1. HC., (trans.) p.192.

2. HNEI., p.150.

3. Ibid.

(mahāsandhivigrahādhikṛta) to all known kings, that they should either surrender or give him battle.¹ On his way he met the messenger of Bhāskaravarman and concluded an alliance with him.² It appears that Bhāskaravarman the king of Assam was also afraid of Śaśāṅka and his alliance with Harṣa was certainly chiefly directed against Śaśāṅka. Proceeding further, Harṣa met Bhaṇḍi³ who informed him about the death of Rājyavardhana and of the escape of his sister Rājyaśrī from the prison of Kanauj. Harṣa thought that his first duty was to find his sister and he left his vast army in charge of Bhaṇḍi and went out in search of her. After a great deal of searching he found his sister in the Vindhya forest.⁴ In the meantime, Bhaṇḍi proceeded with the army against the Gauḍa king, and Harṣa himself joined him on the banks of the Ganges after rescuing his sister.⁵ From the account of Bāṇa it is clear that huge preparations were made by Harṣa to invade the Gauḍa kingdom. Unfortunately we do not know about the result

1. HC., (trans.) p.187-88.

2. Ibid., pp.216-223.

3. Ibid., pp. 224-225.

4. HC., (trans.) p. 249.

5. Ibid., p.258.

of his campaign against the Gauḍa king. Neither Bāṇa nor Hsüan Tsang explicitly states that there was a war between Śaśāṅka and Harṣa. Bāṇabhaṭṭa stops suddenly before describing Harṣa's warfare against the Gauḍa king.

Many scholars have assumed that immediately after the events described above the combined armies of Harṣa and Bhāskaravarman invaded Gauḍa and defeated Śaśāṅka. Vaidya¹ held that Śaśāṅka submitted to Harṣa and was pardoned by him, and allowed to retain his kingdom. Pannikar² thought it probable that "the Gauḍa king (Śaśāṅka) accepted Harṣa's suzerainty and was allowed by him to rule his state as a vassal. A mould at Rohtasgarh describes him as a Mahāsāmanta." N. Ray takes the same view.³ It is not easy to accept these scholars' views. On the contrary we are inclined to agree with B.P. Sinha⁴ that it would have been impossible that Harṣa should have pardoned the murderer of his brother and appointed him as a vassal

1. His. of Med. Hindu India, p.30-31.

2. Śri Harṣa of Kanauj, p.17.

3. GII, III, No. 78, pp. 283ff. Calcutta Review, 1928, pp. 207 ff.

4. Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha, p.251.

chief of the important province of Magadha. On the basis of the Nidhānpur copper plate inscriptions of Bhāskaravarman,¹ Barua held that the alliance between Harṣa and Bhāskaravarman "was disastrous for Śaśāṅka", as "while Harṣa's cousin Bhaṇḍi attacked from the west, Bhāskaravarman at once attacked from the east and occupied Karnaśuvarṇa; being defeated from two sides Śaśāṅka fled towards Orissa."² R.D. Banerji was also "in no doubt about the fact that eventually he (Śaśāṅka) was driven out of Karnaśuvarṇa", and it was "quite possible that this event had taken place before the dates of the Ganjāṃ plates, and at that time he lost his possession of Bengal and was the master of Orissa only".³ The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa also refers to the defeat of Śoma (Śaśāṅka) by 'H' (Harṣa).⁴

But there is still doubt about the theory of the speedy defeat of Śaśāṅka by Harṣa. Bāṇabhaṭṭa, who describes in detail Harṣa's huge preparations for

1. EP. Ind., XII, pp. 65ff.

2. K.L. Barua, Early Hist. of Kāmarūpa, pp. 65-66.

3. Hist. of Orissa, vol. I, p. 129.

4. IHI., p. 50. Jayaswal, K.P. Text M.M.K. V. 725, p. 54.

war, does not mention his victory over Śaśāṅka. On the contrary he mentions Harṣa's victory over the king of Sindh and the Himalayan countries,¹ but he is silent over his success against his most serious enemy. Hsüan Tsang, who mentions that Śaśāṅka had killed Rājyavardhana, does not even indirectly refer to his defeat at the hands of Harṣa, Hsüan Tsang was very biased against Śaśāṅka, as is clear from the Records and The Life, and if Harṣa defeated Śaśāṅka, this fact surely would have been mentioned by Hsüan Tsang. On the contrary Hsüan Tsang mentions other important political events that occurred in the recent past. He refers to Harṣa's failure against Pulakeśi,² the rise of Pūrṇavarman in Magadha,³ and other events, but he does not mention the success of Harṣa against Śaśāṅka, which would no doubt have been too important, if it had in fact occurred, to have been missed by the pilgrim. Only the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa refers to a defeat of

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1. HC., (trans.) p.76.
 2. The Life (Beal) p.83.
 3. Watters, II, p.115.

Saśaṅka by Harṣa. ~~About the struggle between Saśaṅka~~
~~Harṣa the Mañjuśrī Mūlakaḷpa appears to give some in-~~
~~formation.~~ It says, "H. (Harṣavardhana) will be an un-
 rivalled hero. He will be with a great army; that brave
 man of overpowering prowess, decides against the famous
 Soma. The powerful Vaiśya king with a large army marched
 against the Eastern country, against the excellent capital
 called Puṇḍra of that characterless man. Adopting the
 duty of Kṣātra, with the sense of personal injury and
 indignation he, though kind, prone to religion, and
 learned, kills many and becomes an oppressor of living
 creatures, for the reason of being engaged in the duty
 of Chastisement." "He defeated Soma, the pursuer of
 wicked deeds; and Soma was forbidden to move out of his
 country (being ordered) to remain therein (thenceforth).
 H. (Harṣa) returned, having been honoured in that kingdom
 of the barbarian (Mlechchha). He, an excellent king
 amongst followers of Artha (śāstra) and Dharma (śāstra) was
 successful in his undertaking."¹

How far the account of Saśaṅka in the Mañjuśrī-
Mūlakaḷpa can be regarded as historical is difficult to say,

1. IHI., p.50.

because it is a Buddhist work of a purely sectarian kind. Moreover it is a much later work. The stories of Śaśāṅka's oppression ^{of} against Buddhism, his severe disease, painful death, and going down to hell, as described by Hsüan Tsang, are repeated also in the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa. Jayaswal interprets the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa¹ to imply that Śaśāṅka died of a disease of the mouth. But mukha-roga-samākula² more literally would mean "troubled by a disease of the face". If the inner part of the mouth had been meant one would have expected a different word. Later the text³ states that he was pained by fever, lost consciousness, and died as a result of a disease which was said to have been brought on by magic mantras. It is not at all clear that this was the same disease as the mukha-roga mentioned earlier. Therefore we cannot accept Jayaswal's rather imaginative explanation of the text, for the account is vague and uncertain. From the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa it appears that Śaśāṅka was defeated but was not completely crushed by

1. IHI., p.50.

2. Jayaswal, MMK, (Text) V.732, p.54.

3. ...doṣeṇa jvarārto vyādhi mūrcchitāḥ mrto mantra-prayageṇa rājasau . . . v.734, p.54.

Harṣa, who stopped him from any further expansion towards the west, and eventually he returned to his kingdom. The interpretation of Basak summed up in the following passage seems quite as reasonable as that of Jayaswal: "The author here means to say that Harṣa defeated Soma (Śaśāṅka) who was forced to remain confined within his own kingdom, and prevented him from moving further towards the west, and Harṣa himself, not being honoured with a welcome in these eastern frontier countries, returned leisurely to his own kingdom with the satisfaction that he had achieved victory. There is little doubt that as the result of the first campaign Harṣa could not establish political supremacy over Gauḍa"¹. Moreover, Hsüan Tsang² states that "in recent times Śaśāṅka cut down the Bodhi Tree", and he also states that "a few months afterwards Pūrṇavarman, the last descendant of Aśoka on the throne of Magadhā, by pious efforts brought the tree back to life". It appears from the account of the pilgrim that Śaśāṅka was in possession of Magadhā at the time of his death, which took place before A.D. 637-638.

1. HNEI., p.152.

2. Watters, II, p.115.

Ma-twan-Lin, also states that Harṣa assumed the cognomen Śīlāditya, the title of King of Magadha in A.D. 641.¹

How far Ma-twan Lin's statement is true is rather difficult to say, because this is quite a late work.

From the accounts of Hsüan Tsang, it seems that Pūrṇavarman became the vassal of Harṣa in Magadha, because Harṣavardhana was evidently in every respect a more powerful ruler than Pūrṇavarman. It is even possible that Pūrṇavarman was appointed by Harṣa over Magadha.

So we conclude that Harṣa could not establish his suzerainty over Magadha so long as Śaśāṅka survived, and only after the death of the Gauḍa king was Harṣa able to conquer his dominions.

We are told by Hsüan Tsang that Harṣa proceeded eastwards with his army, invaded the countries which had refused allegiance, and waged incessant warfare, until, in six years, he had fought the five Indies.² The pilgrim further stated that after these six years of warfare Harṣa reigned in peace for thirty years without raising a weapon.³

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1. IA., 18880, p.19.
 2. Watters, I, p.343.
 3. Ibid.

It seems from this statement that Harṣa subjugated the whole of Northern India within six years of his accession, that is by A.D. 612, but it hardly deserves serious consideration, because it is contradicted by Hsüan Tsang's own record of the campaigns of Harṣa against Pulakāśin and in Koṅgoda.¹ There is no doubt that Harṣa undertook various military campaigns, probably including one against Śaśāṅka, during these six years. But it is quite sure that he could not achieve any outstanding success so far as Śaśāṅka was concerned, as the latter was in possession of Gauḍa, Magadha, Utkala and Koṅgoda long after A.D. 612. Therefore we do not think that there is sufficient reason to hold that Śaśāṅka was thoroughly defeated by Harṣa in the early years of his reign. The latter's partial success has been exaggerated by authors prejudiced in his favour. Smith rightly observed that Śaśāṅka "escaped with little loss".²

Last days of Śaśāṅka: The date of Śaśāṅka's death cannot be definitely determined, but it must have taken place

1. Beal - The Life, p.172.

2. Early Hist. of India (3rd edn.) p.339.

after A.D. 619 and before, probably very shortly before, A.D. 637-638.

While Hsüan Tsang¹ was travelling in Magadha in A.D. 637-638, he noted that in recent times Śaśāṅka had cut down the Bodhi Tree at Gaya, had destroyed its roots "down to the water" and had burnt what remained.² He destroyed the image of the Buddha in the Vihāra east of the Bodhi Tree³ and as a consequence of his irreligious acts he perished by a fell disease.⁴ The pilgrim has recorded numerous acts of oppression committed by Śaśāṅka against the Buddhists. He is referred to as "overthrowing and destroying the Law of Buddha".⁵ We are informed that by "Śaśāṅka's extermination of Buddhism" the magnificent establishment, founded by a wealthy Brāhmaṇa at Kuśinagara, suffered much, as "the groups of Brethren were all broken up".⁶ According to Hsüan Tsang the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara advised Harṣa to accept the throne in order to "raise Buddhism from the ruin into

1. Watters, II, p. 115; Beal - Records, II, 118, 121-122.

2. Watters, II, p. 115.

3. Records (Beal) II, pp. 121-22.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 91.

6. Watters, II, p. 43.

which it had been brought by the king of Karnasuvarṇa".¹ The author of the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa says: "Soma (Śaśāṅka), enamoured by the words of the Tīrthakas, will burn that great bridge of religion (dharma) which formerly the Jinas (Buddhas) had preached, and destroy all the monasteries, gardens and chaityas".² That Śaśāṅka was not a Buddhist is known from his coins, on which we find the bull, the moon and Śiva.³ His Śaivite leanings are also confirmed by Hsüan Tsang's account, from which we know that Śaśāṅka attempted to remove the image of the Buddha and replace it by that of Śiva in the temple east of the Bodhi Tree.⁴

Unfortunately we do not have any authority except the partial pilgrim and the equally partial Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa to confirm Śaśāṅka's acts of vandalism against Buddhism. Therefore how far this is historically true is difficult to determine. Because of lack of impartial evidence at our disposal, it is impossible precisely to

1. Watters, I, p. 343.

2. IHI., pp. 49-50. Jinaistu Kathitam pūrvam dharmasetum analpakam. (v. 716). Jayaswal's translation "as prophesied by former Jinas", does not seem to convey the intention of the śloka.

3. CCGDMB., pp. 157-8; Pl. XXIII, 14.

4. Watters, II, p. 116.

describe the character of Śaśāṅka and his attitude towards Buddhism. We can only say that he was not a Buddhist and probably did not patronise the Order. Moreover, the kings of ancient India seem almost always to have maintained a policy of religious toleration. It is also important to notice that the pilgrim does not allude to a single instance of such acts of fanaticism in Kārṇasuvarṇa, the capital of Śaśāṅka. Hsüan Tsang observes that in Kārṇasuvarṇa "there were more than ten Buddhist monasteries and above two thousand Brethren who were all adherents of the Sammitīya School."¹ This fact makes it difficult to explain Śaśāṅka's persecution of Buddhism in Magadha. Yet we cannot say that the account of Hsüan Tsang is wholly false. There must be some germ of truth in it, for he would not invent it out of nothing. R.P.Chanda² and R.D.Banerji³ expressed the opinion that probably the Buddhists of those places where Śaśāṅka is said to have committed acts of vandalism made a conspiracy against Śaśāṅka and were sympathetic towards Harṣa, who was a pro-Buddhist king. These two

1. Watters II, p. 191.

2. Gauḍarājamālā, pp. 11-13.

3. BI., p. 110.

scholars therefore hold that the intention behind the persecution was rather political than religious. This seems quite possible, because when speaking of Puṇḍravardhana, Karnaśuvārṇa, Tāmralipti and other places which were also included in Śaśāṅka's dominion, Hsüan Tsang does not refer to any oppression and finds Buddhism in a flourishing condition. If Śaśāṅka desired to carry out a policy of wholesale persecution, there is no reason why only the Buddhists of Bodh Gaya and Kuśinagara should be persecuted and the others left alone. Therefore we agree with R.P.Chanda and R.D. Banerji that there may have been a political reason behind this persecution. In contrast to most other sects of India Buddhist complaints of persecution are comparatively common in their literature. The real motives behind the anti-Buddhist activities of Śaśāṅka cannot be judged, until we know of them from other sources.

The career and reign of Śaśāṅka can only be described in outline, for the details are still lacking. But in spite of the charge of the treacherous murder of Rājyavardhana and his vandalism against Buddhism, there is no doubt that for a time he was no less important a

figure than Harṣavardhana. Almost all that we know about this great king of Gauḍa comes from hostile sources. If he had had a biographer like Bāṇabhaṭṭa or Hsüan Tsang his character might have been painted as attractively as that of Harṣa.

CHAPTER VII

the death of Bengal from Śaśāṅka to the rise of the Pālas

The death of Śaśāṅka was followed by a period of anarchy and confusion. Magadha passed out of the Gauda empire. From the account of Hsüan Tsang it is clear that Pūrṇavarman immediately followed Śaśāṅka on the throne of Magadha.¹ The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa gives a description of the Gauda political system at the death of Śaśāṅka. It states "After the death of Soma (Śaśāṅka) the Gauda political system (Gauda-Tantra) was reduced to mutual distrust, raised weapons and mutual jealousy - one (King) for a week; another for a month; then a republican constitution - such will be the daily (condition) of the country on this bank of the Ganges where houses were built of the ruins of the monasteries. Thereafter Soma's son Mānava will last for 8 months."² This may be a true picture of Gauda after the departure of Śaśāṅka from the political field. In this condition of political and constitutional instability in the capital of Śaśāṅka, the distant provinces cast off the Gauda yoke and became

1. Watters II. p. 115.

2. I.H.I. pp. 50-51; K.P. Jayaswal, Text - v. 745, 746, 747, 748. p. 55.

independent. Magadha became independent under Pūrṇavarman, who was apparently loosely feudatory to Harṣa, ^{and} the Sailodbhavas of Ganjām declared their independence. While in the Ganjām plates of Mādhavarāja II Śaśāṅka is mentioned as overlord,¹ in the Khudra plates of the same ruler there is no mention of any overlord, and Mādhavarāja is referred to as "master of all Kalinga," and the grant is issued from the victorious camp of Kongoda. From the fact that Hsüan Tsang met Harṣa when that king was returning from a campaign in Kongoda, we may assume that Mādhavarāja did battle with Harṣa.

Hsüan Tsang², who travelled in Bengal about A.D. 638, shortly after the death of Śaśāṅka, mentions four kingdoms in Bengal proper, - Puṇḍravardhana, Karṇasuvarṇa, Samatata and Tāmralipti. There is no doubt that Puṇḍravardhana and Karṇasuvarṇa were the two component parts of Śaśāṅka's kingdom. The pilgrim mentions the capital of each of the kingdoms, but he does not say anything of their kings and gives no hint of their political status. The silence has led some scholars to think that they were included within

1. E. Ind. VI. p. 143 ff.

2. Watters II. 184-193. Beal - Records. II 194-204.

the empire of Harṣavardhana.¹ On the other hand, other scholars hold the view that Bengal was occupied by the Kāmarūpa king Bhāskaravarman after the death of Śaśāṅka,² as we know from the Nidhānpur copper plates that the king of Kāmarūpa, occupied Karṇasuvarṇa for some time.³ Seals of Bhāskaravarman and his elder brother Supraṭiṣṭhitavarman were also found in the ruins of Nālandā.⁴ But when Karṇasuvarṇa passed into the hands of the Kāmarūpa king is not known. R.C. Majumdar at first suggested that Bhāskaravarman conquered Karṇasuvarṇa after the death of Harṣa in A.D. 647, but later he doubted this view.⁵ Vidyavinod at first observed that "Bhāskaravarman's occupation of Karṇasuvarṇa must have happened after the death of Harṣa, as he could not have allowed the possession of so great a rival to be included in the territory of Bhāskaravarman, a weaker king to all appearance, however friendly he might have been."⁶

1. e.g. H.A.B.I. p. 213.

2. K.L. Barua, History of Kāmarūpa pp. 65-66; I.C. II p. 38.

3. E.I., XII p. 76.

4. E.I., XXI, p. 77.

5. E.H.B., p. 20.

6. E.I., XII, p. 65.

Tripaṭhi¹ expresses the same opinion. But D.C. Ganguli² emphasizes the point that the king of Kāmarūpa passed without any obstruction with his vast army from his country to Kajaṅgala (Bhāgalpur), presumably through Northern and Western Bengal, to meet Harṣa; this fact testifies that these parts of Bengal belonged to Bhāskaravarman. R.C. Majumdar³ observes, "It is obvious from Hsüan Tsang's account that Saśaṅka's death loosened the bonds which united North and West Bengal and these formed separate kingdoms in A.D. 638. Within a few years both these kingdoms were conquered by Bhāskaravarman." On the contrary, Basak⁴ states that Harṣa with the help of his ally Bhāskaravarman conquered Karnaśuvārṇa by defeating Saśaṅka or his successor, and handed it over to the king of Kāmarūpa. Barua⁵ has shown that Bhāskaravarman was not a mere vassal ruler in relation to Harṣa. From the Harṣacarita it is clear that Bhāskaravarman was an independent king who had submitted to none except Śiva, and that he had sought with Harṣa an enduring alliance on equal terms.⁶

1. T.K., p. 102.

2. I.H.Q., XV, pp. 122 ff.

3. H.B., I, pp. 77-78.

4. H.N.E.I., pp. 153, 226-227.

5. Early History of Kāmarūpa, pp. 63 ff.

6. H.C. (trans.) p. 217.

But in spite of all these objections we are inclined to hold the opinion that after the death of Śaśāṅka Northern and Western Bengal passed into the hands of Harṣa. There is no doubt that Harṣa was a more powerful emperor than the king of Kāmarūpa, as is clearly stated in the life of Hsüan Tsang. We are informed that when Hsüan Tsang was staying in Nālandā, during his second visit, he was invited both by Harṣavardhana and Bhāskaravarman to come to see them. Ultimately he went to Kāmarūpa and stayed with the king. When Harṣa, returning from his campaign in Koṅgoda, got the news that the Master of the Law was staying with Bhāskara-varman, he was surprised, and he said: "I frequently asked him to come here before this - he did not come, how is it that he is now living there?"¹ He therefore sent a messenger to Bhāskaravarman and ordered him to send the pilgrim at once to him. The tone of Harṣa's message was certainly peremptory. The king of Kāmarūpa replied, "He can take my head but he cannot take the Master of Law as yet."² On receiving the message Harṣa became furious and he called all his attendants and said to them that Bhāskara-varman ignored him; how dare he use such harsh words for

1. Life (Beal) p. 172. Bk. V.

2. Life (Beal) p. 172.

the sake of a pilgrim.¹ Then he sent another envoy who gave in an abrupt tone the message of Harṣa - "Send the head that I may have it immediately by my messenger who is to bring it here." As a result^{of} Harṣa's attitude, Bhāskaravarman was "deeply alarmed at the folly of his language," and he at once started with Hsüan Tsang and a vast army of elephants and ships to meet Harṣa. They crossed the Ganges in order to reach the place where Harṣa was halting, and they arrived at the country of Kie-shu-ho-ki-lo (Kajāṅgala) ^{where} and a conference was held.

This incident clearly disclosed the attitude of Harṣa towards the king of Kāmarūpa. Though the latter was not technically a vassal of the king of Kanauj, he seems to have been a subordinate ally, since he attended the conference even after receiving an insulting letter from Harṣa and apparently did not dare to remonstrate. Though Bhāskara may not have been a feudatory of the Kanauj king, "he came to be looked upon more as a feudatory vassal than an equal ally."² Moreover, we know from Hsüan Tsang's "Life" that Harṣa led a campaign into Ganjām and subdued it³ (A.D. 643) and he became master of Orissa, otherwise he could not promise

1. Life (Beal) p. 172.

2. R.C. Majumdar, Ancient Indian History and Civilisation, p.348.

3. The Life - (Beal), p. 159.

to grant the revenue of eighty large towns of Orissa.¹

It appears that Harṣa certainly occupied Śaśāṅka's kingdom of Orissa and Ganjām. It also seems that during his conquest first of Orissa and then of Ganjām, Harṣa must have taken the same route as was taken by Śaśāṅka. He must have proceeded with his vast army through western Bengal and along the sea-coast, which was the easier and the more convenient way to enter Orissa and Ganjām than through the hilly parts of Choṭa Nāgpur. So the conquest of Ganjām strongly suggests that Western Bengal was included within the empire of Harṣavardhana. As we have seen before, when Harṣa was residing at Kajaṅgala to the east of Campā (Bhāgalpur)², Bhāskaravarman king of Kāmarūpa came to meet him there. He must have proceeded with his vast army through North Bengal, which was the easiest and quickest route to Kajaṅgala. When Bhāskaravarman was escorting Hsüan Tsang through these parts of Bengal he did not face any opposition from those countries. This also indicates indirectly that these parts of Bengal belonged to Harṣavardhana, otherwise Bhāskaravarman could not have passed through them without opposition. Moreover, we do not believe that North

1. The Life - (Beal), p. 159.

2. Si-Yu-Ki, Vol. II, p. 193; Life - Beal, p. 172.

Bengal belonged to Bhāskaravarman, who was much inferior to Harṣa in power, as we have stated before. Therefore, we conclude that it was only after the death of Harṣa that Bhāskaravarman occupied Karnaśuvārṇa and issued a royal charter from his victorious camp;¹ at that time his power evidently extended as far as the Kośī River. But how long he ruled over this country is not known. From the Vappa-ghoṣavāṭa grant² we know of another king named Jayanāga, who ruled with Karnaśuvārṇa as his capital. He is known to us also from some gold and gold-plated coins found in Bengal.³ The coins bear the name Jaya. Allan⁴ at first thought that the name might have ended with Gupta, but later on he suggested that the full name might be Jayanāga and thought that the issuer of the coins was identical with Mahārājādhirāja-parama-bhāgavata-Srī-Jayanāgadeva who issued the Vappaghoṣavāṭa charter from the victorious camp of Karnaśuvārṇa, the former capital of Saśāṅka. This view seems probable to us also.

The date of Jayanāga cannot be ascertained with precision, but judging from the palaeography of his coins and inscription

1. E.I., XII, 65; XIX, p. 115.

2. E.I., XVIII, 60 f.

3. B.M.C.G.D., pp. 150-51; Altekar, C.G.E., pp. 330 f.

4. B.M.C.G.D., pp. 150 f.

it appears that his date could be placed at about this time. The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa states that after the death of Saśāṅka (c. A.D. 630) a period of anarchy and confusion followed and Mānava a son of Saśāṅka had a short reign of eight months and five and a half days, to be succeeded by a king named Jayanāga.¹ The date of Mānava may be placed c. A.D. 631-632. It is very probable that this king^{Jayanāga} and the Jayanāga of the plates are the same; if this is the case his date may be placed c. A.D. 632-633. There is no doubt that Jayanāga occupied Karnaśuvārṇa and assumed the titles Mahārājādhirāja Paramabhāgavata. Though it is not known how long he ruled, there is no doubt that his kingdom passed into the hands of Harṣavardhana, before Hsüan Tsang's visit in Bengal.

R.G. Basak² writes - "The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa makes Jayanāga almost a successor of Saśāṅka, but in our opinion he and his son (stated to have reigned for a few months only) preceded Saśāṅka as kings of Karnaśuvārṇa, at a time when Prabhākaravardhana or his father Adityavardhana was ruling as a king of Sthānviśvara." But Basak does not give any

1. I.H.I., pp. 50-51. Jayaswal Text, V. 750 p. 55.

2. H.N.E.I., p. 40.

reason for this hypothesis, so it is better to accept the tradition recorded in the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa. Dr. Barnett,¹ who edited the Vappaghoṣavāṭa copper plate, has written that the script of the epigraph, of well-formed upright Gupta type, belongs to the latter half of the sixth century A.D. B.P. Sinha² also has suggested that Jayanāga was the predecessor of Saśāṅka. He says that Saśāṅka was appointed the Governor of Magadha by Jayanāga, and he goes a further step and says that "the Gaudas under Jayanāga took advantage of the trouble in the Maukhari family over the question of Magadha. Saśāṅka was chosen as the leader of the campaign against Magadha and after the successful expulsion of the Maukharis from the country he became the high-feudatory under the Gauda king Jayanāga."³ Though the problem is still controversial we have already given reason for believing that Mahāsena Gupta was the overlord of Saśāṅka.⁴ Therefore we cannot accept the suggestion of Dr. B.P. Sinha. Thus according to our scheme of chronology the reign of Saśāṅka ended c. A.D. 630; hence we must place the reign of Mānava, after

1. E.I., XVIII, pp. 60 ff.

2. D.K.M., pp. 220 ff.

3. Ibid., p. 223 f.

4. See pp 214-222

a short period of anarchy c. A.D. 632 and that of Jayanāga c. A.D. 633. We cannot place Jayanāga much later than this, because from the accounts of Hsüan Tsang it appears that the kingdom of Śaśāṅka^{Ken} passed into the hands of Harṣa. Moreover it is not possible to place the reign of Jayanāga after the death of Harṣa, because the Nidhānpur copper plate proves that Bhāskaravarman conquered Kaṇasuvārṇa, where he issued his grant, and after him Mādhava Gupta and his successors were ruling over Magadha and Bengal. This evidence compels us to place Jayanāga after the death of Śaśāṅka, but before that of Harṣa.

The inscription¹ of Jayanāga proves that he was a ruler of some consequence; who had feudatories ruling under him, and apparently he issued gold coins. He was a paramabhāgavata or Vaiṣṇava, and he discontinued the obverse of Śaśāṅka's coinage, which showed Śiva standing by his Bull; Jayanāga replaced it by the well established Archer Type. The reverse is a close copy of Śaśāṅka's coins.

The weight of Jayanāga's coins varies from 132 to 139 grains. They are heavily adulterated. One of his coins

1. E.I., XVIII, pp. 60 ff.

in the British Museum (No. 614), which was tested, had only 34⁰/o of gold.¹ From this numismatic evidence also we can place Jayanāga after Saśāṅka, whose gold coins are less alloyed.

The coinage of Jayanāga is a close copy of the well-known Archer type of the Gupta dynasty. His biruda, however, does not even end with Āditya; it is Prakāṇḍayaśa.² His coinage replaces the Garuḍa standard (dhvaja) by the wheel (Cakra) standard.

During the Nālandā excavations of 1935-36, a clay mould was found, showing the motif of the obverse of the coins of Jayanāga. The external diameter of the mould is 1 1/8" and the internal diameter is .75". The name of the king is written under the left arm as Jaya; the bipartite form of ya is used on the coins of Jayanāga and the same form of ya is used on the clay mould. The figure of the clay mould is similar to that of coins of Jayanāga. In front of the king there is the Cakradhvaja instead of the Garuḍa. After the comparative study of the coins of Jayanāga and the clay mould of Nālandā A.S. Altekar comes to the conclusion that

1. C.G.E., p. 331.

2. Ibid. p. 331 ff.

the king Jayanāga of the coins is identical with Jaya (nāga) of the clay mould.¹ Altekar also suspects that he was linked up with Nālandā and sent an officer to the Monastery with authority to issue gold coins from earthen moulds in order to donate them to the establishment.² At present we do not have any evidence to confirm his conjecture. We have to wait for future discoveries.

How long this king ruled over Karnaśuvārṇa, the extent of his kingdom and other details of his reign are not known to us. For more than a century after this king the history of Gauda is very obscure. The death of Harṣavardhana (c. A.D. 646 or 647) was followed by a period of chaos and confusion throughout Northern India. No successor of Harṣa is known and with him ended the famous Puṣyabhūti family and the mighty empire founded by their valour and ability. Though we do not have any Indian records which throw some light on this period, the Chinese account of the embassy of Wang-hsüan-tse has preserved some detailed history of it. We give a short description of it as follows³:-

1. C.G.E., p. 332 ff.

2. Ibid.

3. Classical Age, p.124; P.C. Bagchi has also given a short summary in Sino-Indian Studies, I. 69. The different views are given in S. Lévi's account in Journal Asiatique, Paris. 1900, pp. 297 ff.

Before the embassy arrived in India, Harṣa was dead and his minister named A-lā-na-Shuen (Arunāśva) the king of Tīrabhukti (?), had usurped the throne. Arunāśva attacked Wang-hsüan-tse who had only thirty horsemen as his escort. The ambassador was defeated and his baggage was plundered. He fled alone at night, went to Tibet and asked for help. The Tibetan king Sroṅ-btsan-sgam-po supplied 1200 picked troops, and Amśuvarman, king of Nepal, gave him also 7,000 horsemen as escort. With these troops and horsemen the ambassador determined to take revenge and proceeded as far as Cha-puo-ho-lo,¹ the capital of Mid-India, and captured it after a siege of three days. So many people were killed. The usurper Arunāśva fled, rallied his scattered troops, and again fought with the ambassador. At last the usurper was defeated and captured, and one thousand of his troops were beheaded. The guards of the royal harem obstructed the enemy's passage of the river K'ien-t'o-wei.² They were defeated. The wives and children of Arunāśva were also

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1. Lévi's identification of Cha-puo-ho-lo is with Davāka, Nowgong district; J.A. 1900 p.8. The identification seems very doubtful, and we prefer to leave the matter open.
 2. The river K'ien-t'o-wei has been identified with Gandavati, a possible variant form of Gandakī. p. C.A. 124.

captured by the ambassador, who took 12000 prisoners and many thousands of domesticated animals. The whole of India trembled in fear and 580 countries offered their submission. Kumāra (Bhāskaravarman king of Kāmarūpa) sent Wang-hsüan-tse large quantities of provisions and equipment. After this great victory the ambassador went back to China in A.D. 648, taking with him the usurper as a prisoner, who stayed in China till his death.

It is difficult to say what amount of historical truth there is in this story. But it appears that after the death of Harṣavardhana there was political disintegration in Northern India. And it is also clear that the Tibetan king Srong-btsan-SGampo wanted to spread his suzerainty over India. It is not known whether in fact he conquered any part of India; but he is said to have conquered Assam and Nepāl and ruled over half of Jambudvīpa.¹ The reign-period of Srong-btsan-SGampo is not definitely known, but there is general agreement among scholars that he died about A.D. 650.² Although the Tibetan rule was short-lived and Indian states had cast off

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1. S. Lévi - Le Népal. II. 148. (Jambudvīpa = India).
 2. Tibetan historians give various dates for the birth of Srong-btsan-SGampo, between 600-617 A.D. (JASB III. 218). Lévi (Népal. II. 173) and Thomas (Literary Texts, 49) also place the king's death at 650 A.D., the latter assigning him the dates 600-650 A.D.

the yoke of Tibetan supremacy by about 702 A.D;¹ the Tibetan invasion may have played an important part in Indian politics.

Another important factor during this period was the rise of later Gupta power in Magadha. Shortly after the death of Harṣa we find the later Guptas ruling there. We have seen that after the fall of the Imperial Gupta dynasty the later Gupta dynasty rose to prominence, and asserted its independence about the same time as the Maukharis (c. A.D. 550). An inscription discovered at Aphsāḍ, near Gayā² gives the following list of the early kings of this dynasty:-

- (1) Kṛṣṇa Gupta
- (2) Harṣa Gupta
- (3) Jīvita Gupta
- (4) Kumāra Gupta
- (5) Dāmodara Gupta
- (6) Mahāśena Gupta
- (7) Mādhava Gupta
- (8) Ādityasena.

1. S. Lévi - Nepal. ll. 174-75.

2. C.I.I. III. p. 200.

No royal title is given to any of these kings. Kṛṣṇa Gupta is referred to as a nṛpa (king) and similar titles are given to his successors, except Adityasena who assumed the title Mahārājādhirāja. It is not known who was the first of these to set up as an independent king. The Aṃśad inscription describes in very conventional terms the military achievements of the first three kings. The third king, Jīviṭa Gupta, is said to have led his armies to the Himālayas and to the sea. But we do not know whether these campaigns were undertaken by the later Guptas as feudatories on behalf of their suzerains or as independent chiefs. It is also clear from the record that there was constant warfare between the later Guptas and the Maukharis over the possession of Magadha. We have already seen that the sixth king of this dynasty, Mahāsena Gupta, son of Dāmodara Gupta, is said to have carried his victorious arms as far as the Brahmaputra, and defeated Suṣṭhitavarman, the king of Kāmarūpa. He is described as the king of Malwa in the Harsa-Carita,¹ and his

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1. Kumāra Gupta and Mādhava Gupta, who were appointed to wait upon Rājyavardhana and Harsavardhana, are referred to as sons of the king of Malwa (H.C. (trans.) p. 119) Mādhava Gupta was the son of Mahāsena Gupta. So it would follow that his father was king of Malwa.

victory on the banks of the Lauhitya is confirmed by the Aṃṣad¹ inscription which was issued by his grandson Ādityasena. So it appears that he succeeded in bringing under his sway, at least for some time, extensive dominions from Malwa to Bengal. Most probably he re-established his supremacy over Magadha and Gauda towards the close of the sixth century. There is no doubt that after the rise of Śaśāṅka in the beginning of the seventh century Mahāsena Gupta lost his eastern possessions and it is also probable that he retired to Malwa. Unfortunately he could not hold his western territories either, because the Maitraka king Śīlāditya I of Valabhī conquered a considerable portion of Western Malwa, and the Kalacuri king Śaṅkaragana was also in possession of Ujjain in the year A.D. 595.² In these circumstances Mahāsena Guptā was forced to take shelter, with his two minor sons, Kumāra Guptā and Mādhava Gupta, at the court of King Prabhākaravardhana of Sthāṇvīśvara, whose mother Mahāsena Guptā was probably a sister of king Mahāsena Gupta. The two young sons of Mahāsena Gupta became attendants of Rājyvardhana and Harṣavardhana, the two sons of Prabhākara-
vardhana.

1. C.I.I. III, p. 203.

2. Classical Age, pp. 194-195.

After the departure of Mahāsena Gupta we find that one Deva Gupta soon became king of Malwa.¹ He is also mentioned in the Harṣa-Carita as "the wicked king of Mālwa" who was checked by Rājyavardhana. Deva Gupta's relationship with Mahāsena Gupta is not known. He may have been a member of a collateral branch. In any case he appears to have re-established the Gupta power in Malwa after the downfall of Mahāsena Gupta.

In this connection an important question arises in our mind - what was the original home or the centre of activity of the later Guptas from Kṛṣṇa Gupta to Mahāsena Gupta? There cannot be any difference of opinion on the fact that from Ādityasena, the son of Mādhava Gupta, down to Jīvita Gupta II Magadha was their centre. This is clear from the inscriptions of Ādityasena, Viṣṇu Gupta and Jīvita Gupta II. We have seen that the Aphaṣṭ inscription of Ādityasena gives a continuous account of the whole dynasty from its very beginning to his reign, and it does not mention at all that the ancestors of Ādityasena had migrated from a different place. Hence it may be presumed that Magadha was the kingdom

1. Tripathi, Kanauj, p. 46; JBORS, XIX, 399-400.

over which the dynasty ruled from the beginning. Fleet¹ and others think that Kṛṣṇa Gupta and his successors had been rulers of Magadha from the date of their ascendancy till they lost their political power. But many scholars do not agree with Fleet and they find it difficult to believe that the line of Kṛṣṇa Gupta ruled Magadha from the very beginning. Hoernle² regarded them as belonging to a branch of the imperial Gupta family, ruling in Eastern Malwa. Vaidya³ thinks that "the family mentioned in the Aṃśad inscription ruled in Malwa (Eastern Malwa) at Ujjain until Deva Gupta, the contemporary of Rājyavardhana, was killed in battle by him and the kingdom seized by Harṣa in 606 A.D." R.K. Mukherjee⁴ also maintains the same opinion and believes that "the fortunes of Malwa and the family had a final set back in the defeat of Deva Gupta by Rājya, followed by the annexation of the kingdom by Harṣa ... and extinction of the Guptas of Malwa ... and Harṣa provided his friend Mādhava Gupta as the ruler of Magadha." H.C. Ray-Chaudhuri⁵ holds that Malwa was ruled by the Gupta dynasty, and "in the time

1. C.I.I., III, Introduction, p. 14.

2. J.R.A.S. 1903, p. 551 ff.

3. H.M.H.I., I. p. 24.

4. Harṣa pp. 53-56.

5. P.H.A.I., (4th ed.) pp. 492-493.

of Adityasena Magadha now replaces Eastern Malwa as the chief centre of Gupta power."

The theory of the Eastern Malwa origin of the later Guptas is based on the identification of Mādhava Gupta of the Aṃśad Inscription¹ with Mādhava Gupta of the Harṣa Carita.² Hoernle³ suggested that they were identical. He has been followed by most scholars, including Vaidya, R.K. Mukherjee, H.C. Raychaudhuri and others. R.D. Benerjee⁴ was the only exception who doubted this identification. It is clearly stated in the Harṣa-Carita that Mādhava Gupta who was the constant companion of Harṣa was the prince of Malwa. Mahāsena Gupta was the father of Mādhava Gupta; therefore we can infer that Mādhava Gupta was the king of Malwa. There is no doubt that these later Guptas were the feudatories of the Imperial Guptas and in the beginning they were ruling over Malwa on behalf of their suzerain lords. We also believe that the later Guptas, from Kṛṣṇa Gupta to Mahāsena Gupta, were originally ruling over Malwa as the feudatories of the Imperial Guptas, and that Mādhava Gupta and his son

1. C.I.I., III, pp. 205 f.

2. H.C., (trans.) p.119.

3. See p. 211, footnote 1.

4. J.B.O.R.S., XIV, pp. 254 f.

and successors became the rulers of Magadha.

As we have seen Śaśāṅka was ruling over Magadha, and after his death Pūrṇavarman and Harṣavardhana ruled there. It seems that after the death of Harṣa Mādhava Gupta and his brother Kumāra Gupta, who were constant companions of Harṣavardhana, found opportunity to make themselves masters of Magadha. Most probably it was Mādhava Gupta who ascended the throne of Magadha because his name was mentioned in the Aphaṣṭ inscription, but the name of Kumāra Gupta, the other son of Mahāsena Gupta, is not mentioned there. So it appears that Mādhava Gupta seized the throne of Magadha in his old age and his reign was probably a short one. He was succeeded by his son Ādityasena, the only ruler of the family about whom we know some details. Ādityasena assumed an imperial title of Mahārājādhirāja and this shows that was a more important ruler than his father and ancestors, who did not have such high sounding titles.

The history of Ādityasena and his successors, Deva Gupta, Viṣṇu Gupta and Jīvita Gupta, is known from six inscriptions. All their inscriptions have been found in Bihar. All four kings bear the imperial titles Paramabhātāraka and Mahārājādhirāja.

Ādityasena was a powerful king, ruling over a fairly extensive kingdom. His inscriptions have been found at Aphaṣaḍ,¹ at Shāhpur,² and on Mandāragiri.³ Therefore it is clear that ancient Magadha and Āṅga - that is, modern South Bihar - formed an integral part of Ādityasena's kingdom. On the door of the Vaidyanātha Temple in Deoghar (South-east Bihar), there is a Vaiṣṇava inscription which was brought there from the Mandāra Hill.⁴ R. Mitra thought that the alphabet was Maithili in character.⁵ In the opinion of Fleet, the inscription could not be earlier than the sixteenth century A.D.⁶ According to Marshall, "the inscription is written in Bengali characters of perhaps 300 years ago."⁷ From it we learn that the king Ādityasena was famous for his prowess, and was the ruler of the whole earth up to the shores of the oceans; he was the performer of the aśvamedha and other sacrifices; he arrived with his queen Kośadevī from the Cola city; and performed three

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1. A village, 15 miles north-east of Nawada in Gaya district. C.I.I., III. No. 42. p. 200 ff.
 2. *Ibid.*, No. 43 pp. 208 ff. Shāhpur is 19 miles south-east of Bihar.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 211 ff. Mandāragiri is 7 miles south-east of Banka, the chief town of Banka subdivision of Bhagalpur district.
 4. C.I.I., III. pp. 213-14 (note).
 5. J.A.S.B., (1883) Vol. 52 Pt. I. pp. 190-91.
 6. C.I.I., III, p. 214 (note).
 7. A.S.I. A.R. 1902-3. p. 230.

aśvamedha sacrifices.¹ It seems that the king Ādityasena of the inscription is the later Gupta king of the same name. But there is no doubt that the inscription was engraved much later than his time, because the alphabet of the record ^{is} was not in Gupta character. In the inscription Ādityasena and his wife are referred to as having come from the Cola city with vast wealth. We have no other evidence at all to connect the Gupta king Ādityasena with a city so far south as the 'Colapuram'. His inscriptions do not mention this event at all. It seems impossible that his authority extended up to the Cola city. Aiyangar suggested that there might have been an error in transcription.² B.P. Sinha³ is inclined to suggest that Ādityasena had gone to the south on a pilgrimage to the sacred places there and perhaps received many presents as a matter of courtesy from different rulers of the country. This is possible, but there is no positive evidence to confirm this hypothesis.

It is true that the Vaidyanātha Temple inscription is much later than the time of Ādityasena and it simply contains "a memorial of the great Ādityasena of Magadha."⁴ R.C. Majumdar

1. C.I.I., III. p. 213.

2. Journal of Indian History, V. pp. 313 ff.

3. D.K.M., p. 291.

4. C.I.I., III. p. 214 note.

takes the inscription to be too conventional to be regarded seriously."¹ It appears that Adityasena was a great king and his achievements were remembered in much later days. Therefore we cannot regard the statements of this inscription seriously. In the Aphsaḍ Inscription he is described as Kṣitīśacuḍāmani² and Īokapāla, "the guardian of the world by whose white umbrella the whole circuit of the earth is covered."³ This shows that he was a powerful king. The Aphsaḍ⁴ and the Shaḥpur⁵ inscriptions do not mention his imperial titles. The Shaḥpur inscription is dated in the year 66, presumably of the Harṣa era and therefore equivalent to A.D. 672. But in the two rock inscriptions on the Mandāra Hill,⁶ he is given full imperial titles such as Paramabhaṭṭā-raka Mahārājādhirāja Srī Adityasenadeva and his queen is described as Paramabhaṭṭārikā Rājñī - Mahādevī Koṇadevī,⁷ - the titles which are those of the wives of Paramount Sovereigns. Therefore, there is no doubt that Adityasena was a paramount and imperial ruler.

1. H.B., I. p. 81-2. note 7.

2. C.I.I., III. p. 204.

3. Ibid., p. 207.

4. Ibid., p. 204.

5. Ibid., p. 210.

6. Ibid., p. 211 f.

7. Ibid.

The question arises whether the omission of the paramount and imperial titles for Ādityasena in his Aṃśad and Shāhpur inscriptions indicates that he was for some time a subordinate ruler? Fleet¹ hinted that it was probably after the death of Harṣa that Ādityasena took these titles. Harṣa died in A.D. 646 or 647; but it is important to note that in the record of Ādityasena dated A.D. 672-73 he is given no imperial titles. According to N.N. Das Gupta "the significance of the Nālandā Seal of Bhāskaravarman seems to be much greater than it is ordinarily supposed to bear."² He also says that Devavarman of I⁺- Tsing's Records was a king of Kāmarūpa, probably a lineal descendant of Bhāskaravarman.³ Barua reinforces this suggestion and holds that, after Harṣa's death, Magadha came into the possession of Bhāskaravarman,⁴ and "even after Bhāskaravarman, at least the eastern part of Magadha with perhaps the whole of modern Bengal excepting probably Samatāṭa was under the overlordship of Kāmarūpa."⁵ He further observes that "this supremacy lasted for at least 100 years till the overthrow of the

1. C.I.I., III. p. 212.

2. I.C., II. pp. 87 f.

3. Ibid.

4. Barua, op.cit., pp. 71-72.

5. Barua, op.cit., pp. 71-72.

Kāmarūpa king Harṣavarmadeva."¹ Elsewhere he also remarks that "the fact, which can hardly be contested, is that the successors of Bhāskaravarman down to at least Harṣavarmadeva held all their possessions in Bihar and Bengal."² But there is no adequate basis for holding that the Kāmarūpa kings held sway over Magadha for more than a century. There is no doubt that Bhāskaravarman extended his authority up to the Kōśi river and his seal also proves his supremacy over Magadha, but how long he controlled these parts we do not know. It is definitely known that Adityasena assumed paramount and imperial titles, certainly in A.D. 672-673, and the inscriptions mentioning these titles are found on the Mandār Hill in the Banka subdivision of Bhāgalpur district in East Bihar.³ This makes it clear that Adityasena was the ruler of Bihar up to its eastern limit. Therefore we cannot accept Barua's suggestion that the supremacy of Kāmarūpa over Magadha and Bengal lasted for at least 100 years. Moreover, we do not know of any Kāmarūpa king of the name of Devavarman. From the known history of Kāmarūpa it appears that after the death of Bhāskaravarman, his dynasty

1. Barua, op.cit., pp. 71-72.

2. J.R.A.S., I. pp. 97 ff.

3. C.I.I., III. p. 211.

was overthrown by a barbarian Śālastambha by name, and Kāmarūpa passed under Mleccha rule.¹ It is difficult to identify Devavarman of I'- Tsing with a supposed king of Kāmarūpa.

But it appears from the inscriptions² and seal from Nālanda that Bhāskaravarman extended his supremacy up to the Kōśi and conquered Kārṇasuvarṇa, the capital of Śaśāṅka; most probably Ādityasena acted as a subordinate ruler for some time under Bhāskaravarman and after his death Ādityasena cast off the yoke of Kāmarūpa and took the paramount and imperial titles. Most probably after Bhāskaravarman he took possession of Gauḍa and Kārṇasuvarṇa. The Aphsāḍ inscription was composed by Sūkṣmāśva a native of Gauḍa. This at least indicates Ādityasena's contact with Bengal.

H.C. Raychaudhuri³ thinks that Ādityasena or his son Deva Gupta (III) "is the Sakalottarā-patha-nātha lord of the whole of North India who was defeated by the Cālukya kings Vinayāditya (A.D. 680-96) and Vijayāditya."⁴ R.G. Basak⁵ thinks that Bengal, especially Southern Rāḍhā and Vaṅga,

R.C. Majumdar,

1. Ancient Indian History and Civilisation, p. 348.

2. E.I., XII. p. 65 ff.

3. P.H.A.I., (6th ed.) p. 610 f.

4. Bomb. Gaz. Vol. I., Pt. II., pp. 189, 368, 371; and Kendur plates.

5. H.N.E.I., p. 128.

formed parts of Ādityasena's dominions, as he is said to have extended his conquests towards the shores of the ocean. Basak evidently relies on the statement in the Vaidyanātha Temple Inscription, that Ādityasena conquered the whole earth up to the shore of the four oceans. But we have already ^{seen} discussed that such praises are too conventional to be regarded seriously. Moreover it appears from the inscriptions of Ādityasena and his successor that their power was mainly confined within Bihar. In the inscriptions nowhere is it mentioned that they were known as the lords of the whole North India. We do not have any solid evidence of any kind to support this view.

Ādityasena was succeeded by his son Deva Gupta, born of Mahādevī Konadevī. He is described as Paramabhattāraka in the Deo-Baranārka inscription of Jīvita Gupta II.¹ The Deo-Baranārka inscription also describes Ādityasena as Paramabhāgavata. Deva Gupta succeeded to the empire and paramount status acquired by his father. In Cālukya inscriptions Vinayāditya, who came to the throne in A.D. 680.,² is said to have fought and defeated some paramount sovereign of

1. C.I.I., III. pp. 214 ff.

2. Bom. Gaz. Vol. I. Pt. II. p. 367.

Northern India whose name is not given, and to have acquired a certain standard called Pālidhvaja, the drum called Dhakkā and other trophies. His son Vijayāditya, "pushing on further to the north than even himself, acquired again the pālidhvaja banner, and also the signs of the rivers Gangā and the Yamunā, the Dhakkā (drum) and other attributes and wealth."¹ The latest inscription of Vinayāditya dated A.D. 694 does not mention this event. It may be concluded that his victory over Northern India was undertaken with the assistance of his son Vijayāditya shortly before A.D. 696, when his reign ended. The paramount ruler of Northern India referred to in the Cālukya inscriptions was most probably Deva Gupta. No other king could possibly be described as such in the latter part of the seventh century A.D. Deva Gupta was succeeded by his son Viṣṇu Gupta; about this king we know very little. Jīvita Gupta II succeeded to the throne after the death of his father Viṣṇu Gupta. We have only one inscription - that of Deo-Baranārka² - issued by him. The record says that from the victorious camp near Gomatikotṭaka, situated on the banks of the river Gumti,

1. Ibid., p. 189.

2. C.I.I., III. p. 214 ff. (5 miles south-east of Arrah, the chief town of the Shahabad district).

Jīvita Gupta II granted the village (Deo-Baranārka) which had been formerly granted by the emperors Bālāditya, Śarvavarman and Avantivarman. The description of the camp near the fort of Gomatī-Koṭṭaka suggests that Jīvita Gupta had a military campaign against some enemy, who may have been Yaśocharman of Kanauj. Jīvita Gupta is the last known member of the later Gupta dynasty. No successor of Jīvita Gupta is known to us and the end of the later Guptas is obscure. It appears that Jīvita Gupta might have perished fighting with Yaśocharman.

From the Ragholi¹ (a village of Bālāghat district in Madhya Pradesh) copper plate of a king of the Saila dynasty named Jayavardhana we learn that the brother of his great-grandfather defeated the Paṇḍra king and conquered his dominions. According to this inscription the Saila dynasty had a remarkable history. Their original home was in the valley of the Himālayas, but they conquered the Gurjara country. Later they spread to the east and ultimately they set themselves up in Kāśī, the Vindhya region and Pundra. It is said that the two chiefs, who conquered Kāśī and Pundra

1. E.I., IX. p. 41.

were brothers. The Paundra kingdom conquered by the Sailas has been identified by all scholars with northern Bengal, on the ground that this region was known both as Pundra and as Paundra.¹ Unfortunately, the history of the Saila rule in Bengal is not known to us. The conquest probably took place about A.D. 725.²

The next important event in the history of Bengal is the defeat and death of the king of Gauda at the hands of Yaśovarman, the king of Kanauj. The meteoric career of Yaśovarman is known from the Gauda-vaho,³ a prākṛit poem by his court-poet Vākpatirāja. Kalhana's Rājataranginī also throws some light on Yaśovarman, the king of Kanauj. Nothing is known of the early history and antecedents of this king. The Gauda-vaho, according to its title, purports to give an account of the slaying of the king of Gauda by Yaśovarman, but actually it contains a detailed story of his digvijaya, and refers only once (v.1194), very incidentally, to the slaying of the Gauda king, while five verses (vv. 354, 414-417) refer to the Lord of Magadha, who fled before Yaśovarman in the Vindhya region (v. 354). But the vassal

1. Cf. Belava C.P. I. 27. B.I., p.20.

2. D.H.N.I., I. p. 276.

3. Gauda-vaho, edited by S.P. Pandit (Bombay, 1887).

kings who accompanied the king of Magadha felt ashamed of their conduct and returned back to fight Yaśovarman. A great battle followed and the blood of Yaśovarman's enemies reddened the field. The lord of Magadha was captured and killed by Yaśovarman. Then he proceeded to the sea-coast and conquered the king of Vaṅga. The people of Vaṅga were very powerful and had a large number of warlike elephants, but they submitted to Yaśovarman and acknowledged his suzerainty.

It has been taken that the lord of Gauḍa and the lord of Magadha, mentioned by Vākpati, were the same person.¹ An old commentator, Haripāla, took the lord of Magadha, defeated and killed by Yaśovarman, to be the king of Gauḍa.² We consider the identification of these kings below.

According to the commentator Magadhanātha was Gauḍādhipati as well.³ After defeating and killing Magadhanātha, the conqueror reaches the sea-coast covered with woods. The next country over-run by Yaśovarman was Vaṅga, i.e., Eastern Bengal. We have already seen that Adityasena

1. G.V. XXIV., XLII.

2. Cf. Commentary on V. 844.

3. G.V. XXXIV; V. p. 235.

had extended his conquests to the shores of ocean i.e., the Bay of Bengal, and Jīvita Gupta II may have continued to hold that part of Bengal under him. Thus we find that Yaśovarman defeated and killed Jīvita Gupta II who was the king of Gauda and Magadha.

The description of Yaśodharman's conquests is highly conventional and it is difficult to accept as an historical fact that he conquered all the regions in the north and south as described in the poem. Fortunately we have independent evidence which corroborates in a general way his conquests in the east. An inscription¹ discovered at Nālandā refers to Yaśovarman as the paramount suzerain and it may be taken that his authority extended over Magadha. It is possible also that he carried his victorious arms as far as Bengal and defeated the lord of Gauda and Vaṅga.

If this is the case nearly the whole of Bengal passed into his hands. The nature of his rule is not known to us, but it could not have been of long duration. The dates of Yaśovarman are not definitely known, but his conquests may be approximately fixed between A.D. 725 and 735.² The

1. E.I., XX. p. 37.

2. History of Bengal, I. p. 82.

career of Yaśovarman of Kanauj was cut short by Lalitāditya, the king of Kāshmir. We learn from the Rājatarāṅgiṇī¹ that there was a prolonged struggle between Lalitāditya and Yaśovarman, until at last Yaśovarman was completely defeated and lost his kingdom. We do not know whether he was killed in the battle. Kalhana incidentally remarks that Lalitāditya "tore up Yaśovarman from the root."² This does not necessarily mean that he was killed.

Lalitāditya regarded himself as the master of the various states which had acknowledged the suzerainty of Yaśovarman. He was eager for conquests and he undertook a digvijaya. According to Kalhana's account his victorious campaign covered the whole of Northern India right up to Kalinga, and his arms crossed the whole of Southern India up to the river Kāverī and the Malaya mountains. To what extent these conquests may be regarded as historically true is difficult to say. As regards Bengal, with which we are concerned, there is no direct reference in Kalhana's account to the fact that Lalitāditya invaded any part of this province. But two incidents referred to by Kalhana lead to the pre-

1. RT. IV. 132 ff. (Stein - Trans. of Rājatarāṅgiṇī)

2. Ibid. IV. 140.

sumption that the Gauda king acknowledged his suzerainty.

In the first place, we are told that a troop of elephants from Gauda-maṇḍala joined Lalitāditya,¹ and it is only reasonable to conclude that the king of Gauda acknowledged the suzerainty of Lalitāditya and sent his elephant troops to help him. Secondly, Kalhana tells how the king of Gauda was forced to visit Kashmir at the command of Lalitāditya and was murdered there.² The Gauda king must have had some fear for his safety, but it was removed by Lalitāditya who swore by an image of Viṣṇu that his people would not do any harm to him. In spite of his promise, the king of Kashmir killed the Gauda king at a place called Trigāmi. It appears from this also that the Gauda king acknowledged the suzerainty of Lalitāditya, otherwise he would not have undertaken such a distant journey along with the king of Kāshmir.

The consequence of the murder of the king of Gauda is interesting. Kalhana describes how some loyal and faithful followers of the Gauda king took a solemn vow to revenge the murder, and made a long journey from Bengal to Kāshmir in the guise of pilgrims, and attacked the temple containing

1. RT. IV. p. 148. H.C. Ray states that Lalitāditya "reached the Gauda land" (D.H.N.I., I. 277).

2. RT. IV. 323-30.

the image of Viṣṇu by which Lalitāditya swore the safety of the Gauḍa. With a full knowledge of their inevitable death these brave people entered the temple and broke one of the two images. Unfortunately they broke the wrong image. In the meantime the soldiers of Lalitāditya came from the capital and cut all the Gauḍas to pieces. Kalhana pays the highest tribute to the loyalty and devotion of these people. He says, "Even the creator cannot achieve what the Gauḍas did on that occasion", and "to this day the world is filled with the fame of the Gauḍa heroes".¹ Though the story is romantic, it must have some basis of truth, otherwise Kalhana would not have reported it, since it is disgraceful to king Lalitāditya, who is otherwise depicted as a hero.

Another romantic story connected with Bengal is related by Kalhana about Jayāpīḍa, the grandson of Lalitāditya. The summary of the story is as follows:-

Jayāpīḍa started with a vast army to conquer the world, in imitation of his grandfather. But during his absence his kingdom was usurped by his brother-in-law Jajja, and he was abandoned by his army. Ultimately he dismissed all his

1. R.T. IV. 332, 335.

soldiers and wandered alone. At last he reached the city of Puṇḍravardhana. At that time this city was ruled by a prince called Jayanta as a vassal chief of the kings of Gauda. Jayāpīḍa married Jayanta's daughter, defeated the five Gauda chiefs, and made his father-in-law their overlord.¹

It is difficult to say what amount of truth, if any, there is in this romantic story. But Kalhana's reference to five Gauda kings indicates a political disintegration in the region. It appears also that Gauda was divided into small states and it became a field of struggle for supremacy among a number of local chiefs who fought each other to assert their independence as there was no central authority to keep them under control.

As we have observed, from the death of Śaśāṅka to the rise of the Pālas the political history of Gauda is extremely obscure. We have very limited evidence, out of which it is difficult to construct history. As we have seen, after Śaśāṅka Gauda lost its peace and prosperity,^{and} it became a field of struggle. Might was right. A series of foreign invasion took place. There is no doubt at all that under

1. RT. IV. 402-468.

such political conditions the people must have faced untold sufferings.

(ii) The Kingdom of Vaṅga:-

We do not have any definite information about the political condition of Vaṅga during the reign of Śasāṅka. Probably this part of Bengal remained an independent state at the time. Hsüan Tsang refers to the kingdom of Samatāṭa, which seems to have included the major part of Vaṅga proper. It is difficult to ascertain the definite boundaries of Samatāṭa which must have changed at different ages. The account of Hsüan Tsang shows that Samatāṭa was quite a large kingdom in his days. The pilgrim says that this country was on the sea-coast and was low and moist, it was more than 3000 li¹ (about 500 miles) in circuit and its capital was about twenty li (about 3 1/3 miles) in circuit.

^{1a} Cunningham held that Samatāṭa denoted the whole delta region of the Ganges and its chief city occupied the site of modern Jessore. ^{1b} Fergusson and ² Watters identified it respectively with Dacca and Faridpur districts.

We have said already that South East Bengal became

1. Watters, II. p. 187. ^{1a} C.A.G.I., p. 574 f.

2. Ibid., p. 188.

^{1b} J.RAS, 1873. p. 242.

independent after the disintegration of the Imperial Guptas (A.D. 543-44). But how long it continued to remain independent, and how its independence ended, is still unknown to us. We learn from Hsüan Tsang that a line of Brāhmaṇa kings ruled in Samatata in the first half of the seventh century A.D., but he does not give us any information about them beyond stating that Śīlabhadra, the patriarch of Nālandā, was a scion of this royal family.¹ Reference may be made in this connection to a subordinate ruler named Jyeṣṭhabhadra, mentioned in the Nidhānpur copper plate of Bhāskaravarman. The name ending bhadra has led some scholars to connect him with Śīlabhadra and they assumed the existence of a Bhadra dynasty ruling in Bengal.² A name with the ending bhadra, Nārāyaṇa-bhadra, a vassal chief, is also mentioned in the inscription of Jayanāga.³ Though there is not enough evidence to confirm this, it is possible that there was a Bhadra dynasty, though we cannot say that Śīlabhadra belonged to this dynasty, since it was usual to assume a new name when a man became a Buddhist monk, and his original name may have been quite different. The meaning of Śīlabhadra

1. Watters, II. p. 109.

2. e.g. I.C., II. p. 795-97.

3. Vappghoṣavāta grant, E.I. XVIII, 60 ff.

is "of good conduct" and suggests that it was a religious name taken on ordination.

R.C. Majumdar¹ goes a step further and thinks that this Brāhmanical Bhadra dynasty was supplanted by the Khadga kings who were all Buddhists. Since the evidence is so scanty we cannot support his views. In any case the Khadgas, who may have succeeded these hypothetical Bhadras, are much better attested.

The Khadgas are known from two copper plates found at Ashrafpur, thirty miles north-east of Dacca,² and a short record inscribed on an image of Sarvāṇī (Dūrgā) found at Deubādi, fourteen miles south of Comilla.³ These copper plates reveal the names of three rulers, Khadga⁴dyama, his son Jātakhadga, and his son Devakhadga. We also learn that the name of the last king's son was Rājarāja or Rājarājabhaṭṭa. Both copper plate charters of Devakhadga were issued from his camp at Karmāntavāsaka, (probably to be identified with the modern village of Badkanta,⁴ twelve miles west of the town of Comilla in Eastern Bengal), and they were written by

1. H.B., I. p. 86.

2. M.A.S.B., I. No. 6. pp. 85-91.

3. E.I., XVII. p. 357.

4. J.A.S.B., N.S., Vol. X. p. 85; E.I., XVIII, p. 35.

a Buddhist scribe, Pūrṇadāsa by name. The name of the dūtaka (envoy) in the second plate is Yajñavarman. The Khadga kings were devout Buddhists. The Buddha is invoked in the opening line of both the plates. In the second plate Khadgodyama is described as a great conqueror who made successful conquests in the world, after having shown devotion towards the Sugata (the Buddha), his Dharma and his Saṅgha. But in this inscription, it is not clear whether he was an important king even before these conquests. There remains no doubt from the statement in the Deulbādi image inscription that Khadgōdyama was known as nrpādhirāja (overlord of kings). It seems that under him the family rose to political importance in East Bengal.

R.C. Majumdar is inclined to connect these Khadgas with the Khadgis, whose existence can be traced, as he says, at least to a date as late as the 14th century A.D; and he presumes that "this dynasty of Khadgas came to Eastern Bengal in the train of the Tibetans and the Nepalese during the troublesome days that followed the death of Harṣavardhana."¹ The author gives no explanation of who these Khadgis were,

1. E.H.B., p. 124.

and we can only assume that he¹ refers to the officials of that name mentioned in the Mallasarul Copper Plate,² of the 6th century A.D. where they appear to be village guards. In the absence of definite evidence regarding this point, we cannot agree with R.C. Majumdar. R.G. Basak³ thinks that the surname Khadga may be ^{that of} an indigenous ksatriya family of East Bengal. But again there is no real evidence of this, and so we cannot accept Basak's suggestion. The origin of the Khadga dynasty is still unknown. The second king of this dynasty, Jatakhaḍga, son of Khadgodiyama, is described as "having annihilated his enemies by means of his prowess, just as wind destroys a straw and an elephant a number of horses.". It indicates that this king was also a great warrior and also had to pass through stormy days. The third king was the son and successor of Jatakhaḍga, named Devakhaḍga, who was the donor of the two grants mentioned above. He is described in the image inscription as "a lordly maker of donations" (dānapatiḥ), "majestic" (pratāpī) and "possessing a sword which had subdued his foes" (Jitārik-hāḍgoḥ). The couchant bull (significant of Saivism) in the

1. H.B., I. p. 81 f.n. 3.

2. E.I., XXIII. p. 159.

3. H.N.E.I., p. 204.

seal plate B indicates that the king, though he was a devout Buddhist, was not intolerant towards the other religion. The donee of both the plates appears to be the revered Buddhist teacher, Saṅghamitra, and his monastery. The first gift was made by the king Devakhaḍga for the longevity of his son, Rājarājabhaṭṭa, who is mentioned in the second plate simply as Rājarāja. These plates mention a group of four monastic institutions (vihāra-vihārika-Catuṣṭaya) and thus they are important as showing the existence of Buddhism in East Bengal at such an early period. The plate A. mentions the chief queen of Devakhaḍga, Prabhāvatī, as being in possession of some land which the king gave away to the Buddhist monasteries. There is a reference in the second plate to a king known as Br̥hatparameśvara (the great lord) and another person named Udiraṇakhaḍga, as being the first donors to other donees of land, which is now again given by Rājarājabhaṭṭa, but these two persons' relationship with the family is not known.

The Śarvvāṇī image inscription also mentions these three kings, and declares that Mahādevī Prabhāvatī, the queen of Devakhaḍga, out of devotion caused the image of the goddess to be plated with gold. Thus an eight-armed image of

Sarvvānī, (Dūrgā) was revered by the queen of a devout Buddhist king of East Bengal. This clearly shows that different religious sects bore a spirit of toleration towards each other in a very high degree.

The chronology of these Khadga kings is a matter of dispute. Some data are available for fixing the date of these two Ashrafpur copper plates. Both plates are dated. ^{in plate A as being Samvat 713 and referred it to the Vikrama era.} R.L. Mitra¹ read the date as 13. Hoernle² read the date as 13 on both the inscriptions, and referred it to the Newar era, which commenced in A.D. 880. G.N. Laskar³ also followed Hoernle in holding that both the inscriptions are dated in the 13, but claimed that this is the regnal year of Devakhadga. He assigned the inscriptions to the 8th or 9th century A.D. R.D. Banerjee⁴ was led, on palaeographic considerations, to place these inscriptions in the 10th century A.D. On the other hand Messrs. N.N. Basu⁵ and N.K. Bhattasali⁶ have placed the plates in the seventh century A.D. R.G. Basak⁷ also agrees with N.K. Bhattasali

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1. J.A.S.B., N.S., XIX p. 374.
 2. Proc. J.A.S.B., 1891, pp. 119 ff.
 3. M.A.S.B., I. No. 6, pp. 85 ff.
 4. Baṅglār Itihāsa, p. 207.
 5. Baṅglār Jātiya Itihāsa (Rājanya Kānda), p. 147.
 6. J.R.A.S., 1914. A forgotten Kingdom of East Bengal.
 7. H.N.E.I., p. 202.

in believing that "these Khadga inscriptions cannot be assigned a date posterior to the beginning of the 8th century A.D." Is it a regnal year or a date in an era not mentioned in the documents themselves? According to R.C. Majumdar¹ the date of the first plate is the year 13, while the year mentioned in the second plate is either 73 or 79. He has taken the first date as a regnal year, but believes that the second is to be assigned to the Harṣa era (- A.D. 679 or 685). Relying on the palaeography of the Āshrafpur and Deulbādi inscriptions, and the Chinese evidence, he thinks that the Khadga dynasty ruled approximately between A.D. 650 and 700. According to B.C. Sen² the characters of the Āshrafpur Plates are more closely allied to those of the Madhuban and Banskhera plates of Harṣa than are even those of the Shāhpur or Aphsad inscriptions of Adityasena (A.D. 673). On the other hand R.G. Basak³ is inclined to say that the Khadga dynasty of four rulers ruled during the last three quarters of the 7th century A.D., and cannot have survived long beyond the first quarter of the 8th century,

1. J.A.S.B., (N.S.) XIX, 1923, pp. 375-79.

2. B.C. Sen. Hist. Aspec. Beng. Insp. p. 279.

3. H.N.E.I., p. 193.

and he also says that they reigned in East Bengal contemporaneously with the last three or four rulers of the later Gupta dynasty of Magadha, ruling from about 650-750 A.D. We are rather inclined to agree with B.C. Sen who assigns the date of the Khadga dynasty to the 7th century A.D. Some light is thrown on the chronological position of the dynasty by the Chinese accounts of the seventh century A.D. We have already noticed that the existence of a Brāhmanical dynasty in Samatāṭa is suggested by the accounts of Hsüan Tsang, which refer to his contemporary Śīlabhadra,¹ the abbot of the Nālandā monastery, as belonging to this royal family. A later reference to the political history of Samatāṭa is available from the accounts of I-tsing. From him we learn that several pilgrims from China came to India² after Hsüan Tsang, but before I-tsing himself arrived in India in 671 A.D. Among these Chinese visitors I-tsing in his memoirs refers to Sheng-chi, a Buddhist monk priest and a companion of Ling-wan, who came to India "by the Southern sea route and arrived at Samatāṭa." The king of this country at the time of his visit was Rājabhata who

1. Watters, II. pp. 109, 168, 227.

2. Beal - Life, Intro., pp. xxv, xi.

was a Buddhist Upāsaka.¹ Thus he must have been ruling Samatāṭa sometime before A.D. 671. This ruler has been identified by most scholars with Rājarājabhaṭṭa, the son of Devakhaḍga of the Khaḍga dynasty.² This seems to us to be very probable. So if we accept the identification of Rājabhaṭṭa of I-tsing's account with Rājarājabhaṭṭa, it is not possible to agree with R.C. Majumdar,³ who holds that one of the Āshrafpur plates is dated in the year 73 or 79 of the Harṣa era. The plates seem to have been engraved during the reign of Devakhaḍga, the father of Rājarājabhaṭṭa. But Rājarājabhaṭṭa must have occupied the throne before I-tsing's visit (A.D. 671-673). We know from the inscriptions that Rājap^{rāja}haṭṭa was fourth king of this line, and it^{thus} is most probable that the dynasty was established in the beginning of the seventh century A.D., which approximately corresponded to the time of the end of the reign of the East Bengal king Samācāradeva. But we learn from the Mahākūṭa inscription⁴ that the Cālukya

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1. Ibid. pp. xi-xli; Chavannes, Religieux Éminents (I-tsing), p. 128, f.n.3.
 2. J.A.S.B., N.S., XIX, p. 378; H.N.I., p. 207.
 3. He identifies Devakhaḍga with Devavarman mentioned by I-tsing, see J.A.S.B., XIX, p. 378 and n.3. For Devavarman, see Beal, Life, Intro. XXXVI-VII.
 4. IAA. Aut., XIX, p. 16. Mahākūṭa inscription, dated in the 5th year of the reign of the Western Cālukya king Raṇavikrānta (probably 601-2 A.D.)

king Kīrtivarman claimed to have conquered Aṅga, Vaṅga Kalinga and Magadha. As Kīrtivarman ceased to reign in 597-98 A.D., his conquests in Bengal must be placed in the last quarter of the sixth century A.D. It is not impossible therefore, that either Samācāradeva or one of his successors, was the adversary of Kīrtivarman. Though the nature and extent of Kīrtivarman's success is not known, it might have had some effect on the break-up of the kingdom of Vaṅga. It is also not impossible that the Khadgas took advantage of it and Khadgōdyama established ^{his} new dynasty some time in the beginning of the seventh century A.D.¹ As we think this conclusion must be regarded as tentative but feasible.

The Tippera copper plate grant of Sāmanta Lokanātha² introduces us to a line of feudatory chiefs ruling in East Bengal in the region round Tippera. The plate has a seal attached, which shows on the obverse a figure of the goddess Lakṣmī or Srī in relief standing on a lotus with two elephants at her two sides sprinkling her with water from jars lifted by their trunks, the reverse bearing a full-blown lotus.

1. If we place the date of Rājarājabhaṭṭa, the fourth king of this dynasty, in the latter half of the 7th cent. A.D. the date of Khadgōdyama should be in the beginning of the 7th cent. A.D.

2. E.I., XV. pp. 301 ff; H.N.E.I., pp. 194 ff.

This plate has an affinity with the three Faridpur plates (A. B and C) since the latter also have seals containing the same emblem. Like the Gunaigarh copper plate inscription of Vainya Gupta of the early sixth century A.D., this inscription was found in the Tippera district. The seal of Lokanātha bears two legends, one in relief - kumārāmātyā-dhikaranasya, written in characters of the Gupta age; and the second, Lokanāthasya in similar characters to those used in the writing of the whole of this copper plate.

The Tippera copper-plate of Lokanātha is dated in words, but unfortunately the position containing the ^{numeral} ~~figure~~ for hundreds is lost and the remaining part gives only 44. R.G. Basak has taken the date of the inscription as the year 44 and on palaeographic ground he is inclined to suggest that the date is in the Harṣa era, thus corresponding to A.D. 650. On this hypothesis it seems that the plate was issued three or four years after the death of Harṣavardhana. On the other hand D.R. Bhandarkar¹ pointed out ^{that} the akṣaras preceding the numerals for 44 appear to be dhika for adhika (increased) and hence he suggested that the date of this

1. I.A., Vol. LXI. 1932, p. 44.

inscription is at least 144 and not 44 as given by R.G. Basak. He therefore thought it to be equivalent to A.D. 750. Basak says that "it could as well be argued that the date is 344 Sambat and the reference should be in that case be to the Gupta era, as in Vainya Gupta's Tippera plate, and therefore it is equivalent to A.D. 663-64." He is not in favour of regarding the record as belonging to the first half of the eighth century A.D. On the palaeographical evidence R.G. Basak refers the copper plate to the 7th century A.D. If we accept this date (A.D. 650-663) it appears that Lokanātha was a feudatory of the Khadga dynasty, as we learn from their inscriptions that Jātakhadga annihilated his enemies and Devakhadga had under him a number of feudal rulers.

From the inscription of Lokanātha we have a short history of four or five generations of Sāmantas of the Nātha family. They were Śaiva in religion. On account of corrosion and decay, the name of the first king, ending in -nātha, is lost in the copper plate, but he is said to have sprung from the good family of the sage Bharadvāja. He had the title of adhimahārāja. From this title it appears that he was a renowned king. But we do not know when this king made an

effort to assume independent imperial authority in this region of East Bengal. Śrīnātha was the second member of this dynasty. He is said to have acquired much fame as a hero on the battlefield. This king "repelled all the misfortunes of the State through the delegates in possession of his own supremacy and displayed all attainable feats on earth."¹ His son, Bhavanātha was a religious minded person, who had "the one thought as to how to cross the waters of the ocean of existence",² and gave up royalty in favour of his brother's son, whose name is not found in the inscription. The next king, Lokanātha was the donor of the grant. It is not known whether Lokanātha was a son of Bhavanātha or his brother's son. It seems to us that Lokanātha was a son of Bhavanātha's brother and not of Bhavanātha himself, since the inscription does not specify the relationship, which we might expect to have been done, had Lokanātha been the direct heir. Regarding his achievements, it is said that Lokanātha was a very able ruler, "whose soldiers depended for victory chiefly on their own swords and on the intellect of his ministers." He also had a fine cavalry. There is also

1. H.N.E.I., p. 196.

2. E.I., XV. line 8 p. 307; H.N.E.I., p. 196.

a reference (in v.7) in this inscription to the fact, that "a large number of soldiers belonging to the paramount sovereign (parameśvara) met with annihilation in a battle (?) on his behalf." Another battle, in which one Jayatūṅgavarṣa seems to have been a party, is also mentioned in the copper plate (in v.8). It is not clear what part Lokanātha took in it. Another important fact is referred ^{to} in the inscription (v.9), ^{which states} that a king named Jīvadhāraṇa took military action against Lokanātha, but he gave up the war on the advice of his minister, because Lokanātha had got a royal charter (Srīpatta) from the imperial king, and Jīvadhāraṇa surrendered his own territories (viṣaya) along with his army (Sādhana) to Lokanātha. So it seems that Jīvadhāraṇa temporarily seized and occupied Lokanātha's land. Like Lokanātha himself, this Jīvadhāraṇa may have been a local chief in some part of Eastern Bengal, enjoying a more or less independent position. As regards the identity of Jaytūṅgavarṣa, we know that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings has similar birudas, for instance Avaloka, Tūṅgavarṣa, and Vallabha. R.C. Majumdar¹ has taken Jayatūṅgavarṣa as the biruḍa of

1. H.B., I. p. 88.

either Khaḍgodyama or Jātakhaḍga. But we do not have the slightest evidence that the Khaḍgas used such titles. So it is impossible to identify this Jayatūṅgavarṣa, a contemporary of Lokanātha, and we have to wait for future evidence in order to settle this question.

From the Tippera inscription we learn that Mahāsāmanta, Pradoṣaśarman, an orthodox Brāhmaṇa by caste, was a high officer of the State under Lokanātha. He was a noble man and was famous for his valour and the strength of his arms. This officer requested the king (Lokanātha), through his son Rājaputra Lakṣmīnātha as envoy (dūtaka), for a plot of land in the forest region (aṭavi-bhūkhaṇḍa) in the visaya of Suvvuṅga, where he desired to build a temple of Ananta-nārāyaṇa and to settle more than a hundred Brāhmaṇas who were well versed in the four Vedas. He also wanted to meet the recurring expenses of the daily worship of the deity.

The inscription clearly mentions the amount of land in pātakas and dronavāpas which are mentioned in all early East Bengal documents. The lands were allotted individually and in some cases jointly to the grantees. We also find that the name of Lokanātha's minister of peace and war

(Sāndhivigrahika) was Praśāntadeva and he carried the document on the king's behalf.

It appears from the inscription of Lokanātha that he was a powerful feudatory. The history of the Khadga dynasty after Rājarājabhaṭṭa is not known to us. Most probably Rājarājabhaṭṭa was the last Khadga ruler. It is also possible to assume that after him Lokanātha ruled over South East Bengal for some time.

According to the account of the Tibetan monk, Tāranātha,¹ the Candra dynasty had been ruling in Bhaṅgāla (South East Bengal) before the Pālas and the names of all the kings mentioned by him before Gopāla end in Candra.

We are told in his account that one of these kings was Vṛkṣa-Candra, whose descendants, king Vigamacandra and his son Kāma-Candra, ruled in the East during the time of Śrī Harṣa (the emperor Harṣavardhana).² The next king was Siṃha-Candra who flourished during the reign of Śīla, son of the emperor Śrī Harṣa.³ Bālacandra, son of Siṃha-Candra,

1. The account is based on the German translation of Tāranātha's History of Buddhism by A. Schiefner (Tāranātha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien aus dem Tibetischen Übersetzt von Anton Schiefner, St. Petersburg, 1869). Portions of this book were translated into English in Indian Antiquary IV 361 ff.

2. A. Schiefner, Tāranātha's History of Buddhism, p. 126.

3. Ibid., p. 146.

was driven from Bhaṅgāla and ruled in Tīrahuti (North Bihar).¹ Tāranātha stated in his account that Bālacandra's son Vimala-candra revived the fortunes of his family, and ruled over the three kingdoms Bhaṅgāla, Kāmarūpa and Tīrahuti. He married the sister of king Bharthari (Bhartṛhari?) of the Malwa royal family. He was succeeded by his son Govicandra about the time when Dharmakīrti, the famous Buddhist teacher, died.² Govicandra was succeeded by Lalitacandra, his relation on the father's side, who ruled for many years in peace.³

After mentioning the reigns of Govicandra and his successor Lalitacandra, both of whom attained spiritual salvation, Tāranātha remarks:

"Thus Lalitacandra was the last king of the Candra family. In the five provinces, Bhaṅgāla, Oḍiviśa (Orissa) and the rest, every Kṣatriya, Grandee, Brāhmaṇa and merchant was a king in his own house (in the neighbourhood) but there was no king ruling over the country."⁴

Then Tāranātha tells of Gopāla, a son of ^aKṣatriya

1. Ibid., pp. 146, 158.

2. Ibid., p. 195.

3. A. Schiefner, op.cit., p. 197.

4. Ibid., H.B.R., p. 183.

woman who lived near Pundravardhana. He was a devotee of the Goddess ^{Cundā} ~~Chandā~~; he was directed by the goddess in a dream, and went to the Vihāra of Ārya Khasarpaṇa, and he prayed there for a kingdom. He was asked to proceed towards the east.¹ Then follows a strange story:-

"At that time the kingdom of Bhaṅgala had been without a king for many years, and people were suffering great miseries. The leaders gathered and elected a king in order that the kingdom might be lawfully ruled. The elected king was, however, killed that very night by a strong and ugly Nāga woman who assumed the form of a queen of an earlier king (according to some, Govicandra according to others, Lalitacandra). In this way she killed every elected king. But as the people could not leave the kingdom without a king, they elected one every morning, only to see that he was killed by her during the night and his dead body thrown out at day-break. Some years passed in this way, the citizens being elected in turn as king for the day. At this time a devotee of the goddess Cundā came to a house, where the family was overwhelmed with grief. On enquiry he learnt

1. A. Schiefner. op.cit., p. 203-4; R.C. Majumdar's translations are followed in these quotations. (H.B. I. p. 184).

that next day the turn of the elected king fell on a son of that house. He, however, offered to take the place of the son, on receiving some money, and the joy of the family knew no bounds. He obtained the reward and was elected king in the morning. When in^(sic) midnight the Nāga woman, in the form of a Rākṣasī, approached towards^(sic) him, he struck her with the wooden club (which he always carried), sacred to his tutelary deity, and she died. The people were greatly astonished to see him alive in the morning. He thereupon offered to take the place of others whose turn came next to be elected as kings, and he was elected king seven times in course of seven days. Then, on account of his pre-eminent qualifications, the people elected him as a permanent king and gave him the name Gopāla."

It seems that Tāranātha's story contains some historical truth. It is clear from the story that the chaos and confusion existed in Bengal, because of the absence of any central political authority. The account of Tāranātha is to a large extent corroborated by epigraphic evidence. According to the Khālimpur copper plate¹ of Dharmapāla Gopāla was elected as a king by the prakṛtis² in order to

1. Khālimpur Copper plate, No. 2. E.I., IV.

2. The exact character of the prakṛtis in this context is very uncertain. The author may have had the people at large in his mind, but the term may here refer to the seven prakṛtis of Hindu political theory, or to ministers and subordinate chiefs.

put an end to the state of anarchy which prevailed in Bengal. The inscription mentions mātsyānyāya, the term which in this connection signifies a condition of existence where there is no established government, encouraging every strong man to consider himself superior to his surroundings and engage in acts of self-aggrandisement at the cost of his weaker neighbours. In agreement with the account of the Tibetan historian, the Khālimpur copper plate refers to a sort of popular election that was resorted to at a critical moment in the history of Bengal. The evidence of Tāranātha also shows that some kind of elective monarchy prevailed during the period of anarchy preceding Gopāla's accession.

The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa also mentions the anarchical period before the accession of Gopāla. It says, "there will be Deva known as king of Magadha." After his reign Candara will be king. Deva is probably Deva Gupta, the later Gupta king.

It mentions¹ the name of three kings before Gopāla. The name of the first king begins with the letter 'bha' (v. 679). This bha appears to be the same as a king who

1. I.H.I., pp. 42, 60, 71.

in the same text is also called Svāda in the Sanskrit version and Rājabhadra in the Tibetan. He was "a leading king, a popular leader of the Gaudas, but an invalid." The Bhaṭṭārādya or 'Svādādya' king was Sūdra by caste (v.869). It appears from verse 873 that this king was a Nāga Rāja. The Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa says "Sva will be a Sūdra by caste, a cripple, low, non-religious, ill-tempered and quarrelsome. He destroys Brāhmin feudal lords, recluses of good conduct, and others. He will be always busy in maintaining law and order (nigraha). His administration will be sharp, he will be the killer of thieves, forbidding of all rascals practising religious hypocrisy. He will be a freedom-giver and will be a donor. He will rule for 17 years. He dies of leprosy."¹

The Svādādya king was followed by one whose name began with the letter 'da'. He ruled for ten days. Then there arose another king who ruled only for three days. His successor was Gopāla. The account clearly shows a state of anarchy antecedent to Gopāla's accession to the throne.

Tāranātha gives us some data by which we can approximately fix the dates of ^{the} events he states. He says that Govicandra

1. I.H.I., p. 71.

took the throne about the time when the great Buddhist teacher Dharmakīrti died. As Dharmakīrti was a student of Dharmapāla,¹ who was a teacher in Nālandā University at the time when the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan Tsang visited it; Govicandra's reign could be placed in the last quarter of the seventh century A.D. (A.D. 675-700). As his successor Lalitacandra ruled for many years; his death and the end of the Candra dynasty may be placed about A.D. 725.² Then followed the period of anarchy. If we assign twenty-five years to this period, the accession of Gopāla may be placed about the middle of the eighth century A.D.³ The same approximate date is also arrived at by counting backwards from the known dates of later Pāla kings.

But how far the accounts of Tāranātha and the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa are historically true, is difficult to say, because we do not have any contemporary evidence to support these traditions. It appears that these are mere stories and have little historical value.

1. A. Schiefner. op.cit., p. 176.

2. H.B., I. p. 186-187.

3. Ibid., p. 176 ff.

CHAPTER VIII

The Administrative System of Bengal from the Mauryas to Śaśāṅka.

Pre-Gupta Administration.

During the Maurya period there was an elaborate system of government, as is indicated by Kauṭilya, Megāsthenes and the Aśokan Inscriptions. But we have no detailed knowledge of the special features of the system of administration in Bengal.¹ The Mahāsthān inscription, the only local epigraphic record that we have of this period, indicates ~~clearly~~ that North Bengal was administered by the Mauryan emperor. The inscription records some beneficent activities of the ruling power and indicates the care for the good government and welfare of the people, which is a significant feature of the Maurya administration, particularly

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1. Monahan (EHB, pp. 34ff) covers the administration of Bengal in this period by a detailed analysis of the Arthaśāstra and other sources for the Mauryan period. We do not follow his example, since we cannot be sure that the Arthaśāstra exactly reflects the Mauryan system of government, and even if it does, its instructions must have applied to the Empire as a whole and have no special connection with Bengal.

that of Aśoka. The Mahāsthān inscription¹ records the grant of paddy and money to the people, by way of loan, in order to relieve the distress caused by famine. There is a clear indication that the government store-house (koṭhāgāle) should be stocked with grain for the relief of the people during flood or famine.

Period of Gupta Imperialism

The epigraphic records (Dhanaidaha C.P., Baigrām C.P., five Dāmodarpur C.Ps., Pāhārpur C.P., Gunaigarh C.P., four Faridpur C.Ps. of Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva) of the Gupta period enable us for the first time to draw an outline of the general framework of administration in the region.

The imperial territory in Bengal directly under the administration of the emperor^s was organised into a series of well-defined administrative units. The biggest division was called bhukti, which was again subdivided into visayas, mandalas, vithīs and grāmas. The Imperial Gupta records refer specially to only one bhukti

1. EI., XXI, pp; 85ff; IHQ., 1934, p. 57ff. See also SI., pp. 82 ff. See above, pp 76-77 .

in Bengal named Pundravardhana bhukti. Another bhukti was that of Vardhamāna, referred to in the Mallasārul grant of Gopacandra (6th century A.D.).¹

It appears from the epigraphic sources² that the central government under the Gupta emperors appointed the provincial governors (uparika) who are described as being tatpāda-parigrhīta "accepted by his (imperial majesty's) feet". The uparika was sometimes selected from members of the imperial family. In the time of Kumāra Gupta I the governor of the bhukti had the title uparika and in the time of Budha Gupta, the title mahārāja was added to it. Similarly in the earlier period the officer in charge of a viṣaya (district) was referred to simply as kumārāmātya, which was a title applied to many government officials of high rank, later he was also referred to as āyuktaka.

The bhukti and viṣaya may be said to correspond roughly to the Division and District of modern Bengal. As a rule the governor of a bhukti appointed the district-

1. Mallasārul C.P., EI., XXIII, p.155.

2. EI., XV, pp.113ff.

officer but in some cases the appointment seems to have been made directly by the emperor. This is shown by the Baigrām copper plate¹ in which the viṣayapati of Pañcanagarī is described as directly meditating on the feet of the emperor.

The inscriptions of the period mention only a few viṣayas. The viṣaya which is mentioned in the Dāmodarpur copper plates (Nos.1,2,4 and 5) is called Koṭivarṣa, belonging to the bhukti of Puṇḍravardhana.² The Dhanaidaha copper plate³ of the reign of Kumāra Gupta I (113 G.E), makes mention of another such administrative unit called Khāṭāpāra or Khādāpāra,⁴ which must have been contained in the same bhukti of Puṇḍravardhana. The Baigrām copper-plate mentions also a viṣaya called Pañcanagarī. This is the third Viṣaya that we know, as belonging to the Puṇḍravardhana bhukti. From the Faridpur grants of Gopacandra, Dharmāditya and

1. EI.,XXI,p.81.

2. EI.,XV,pp114 ff.

3. EI.,XVII,pp.346ff.

4. ~~Cf. Mallasārū C.P., EI., XXIII,p.155.~~

Samācāradeva the existence of a viṣaya named Vāraka-
Mandala is proved.¹ The Vappaghoṣavāṭa grant² refers
 to the Audumvarikaviṣaya, whose governor "meditated on
 the feet of Mahārājādhiraja Jayanāga of Karnaśuvārṇa".
 The Tippera copper plate refers to Uttara-Maṇḍala.³
 Hence it appears that Viṣaya and Maṇḍala ^{may have been} ~~are~~ used as
 synonymous terms. We meet the two terms together in
 the name Vāraka-maṇḍala Viṣaya from the Faridpur grants
 (A.B.C.) and the Ghugrāhāti grant. This may mean either
 a viṣaya comprised within the Vāraka-maṇḍala or the
 letter may have been the name of the viṣaya itself. But
 in the copper plates this is not clearly explained. It
 appears to us that the name of the viṣaya itself was
 Vāraka-maṇḍala.

There was another administrative unit known as
Vīthī. The reading Suvarṇa-vīthī (2,3) in the Ghugrāhāti
 inscription of Samācāradeva is correct.⁴ Dr.R.G.Basak⁵
 holds that Suvarṇa-vīthī was the name of the headquarters

1. IA., 1910 (Vol. 39 & 40), pp. 193ff; JASB(NS) vol. VII, 1910, pp. 485ff; EI., XVIII, pp. 75ff.
2. EI., XVIII, pp. 60ff.
3. IHQ., VI, pp. 52ff.
4. EI., XVIII, 74ff. See above, p. 191.
5. HNI., p. 192.

and Navyāvakāśikā, that of the province. The Mallasārul grant shows that in the reign of Gopacandra there was a Vithī called vakkattaka contained in the Vardhamāna-bhukti.

The smallest administrative unit was called grāma (village). Some village-names end with the term -agrahāra. The Tippera copper plate¹ mentions the name of a village as Guṇekāgrahāra-grāma. The names of some cities are known, such as Koṭivarṣa, Puṇḍravardhana, Karṇasuvarṇa and Pañcanagarī. Puṇḍravardhana was the name of a bhukti also, Koṭivarṣa and Pañcanagarī were the viṣayas, and Karṇasuvarṇa was the capital of Śaśaṅka. Navyāvakāśikā (Faridpur copper plates) and Kṛpura (Tippera copper plate) were also well known cities.^{1a}

We shall now discuss the nature of administrative work connected with the different units which are described above.

We learn from the Dāmodarpur copper plates² that in the reign of Kumāra Gupta I, Cirātadatta was in charge of

1. I.H.Q. VI. p. 56.

1a. For the location of these cities see above, pp. 11-13, 19, 129, 166, 178.

2. EI., XV, pp. 113 ff.

the Puṇḍravardhana bhukti at least from 124 to 128 G.E. (Nos.1 and 2). In the reign of Budha Gupta the Uparika-Mahārāja Brahmadatta was in this post in 163 G.E. (No.3); later in the same reign Mahārāja Jayadatta occupied the office (No.4). In the fifth Dāmodarpur copper plate the officer who was in charge of the province is called Rājaputra-deva-bhaṭṭāraka. From the title it may be concluded that he was a son of the reigning king who had been appointed to the governorship of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. The Faridpur grants,¹ while not mentioning the term bhukti, mention certain officers of high position who were serving under the three rulers, Dharmāditya, Gopacandra and Samācāradeva. These officers also were appointed by the above mentioned rulers, who were styled Mahārājādhirāja. The titles of the officers of the Faridpur copper plates are not wholly identical with the designations of the Dāmodarpur governors. Copper plate A from Faridpur styles Sthānudatta Mahārāja; copper plate B mentions the two designations of Nāgadeva, Mahāpratihara and Uparika. Nāgadeva served successively

1. IA.1910, pp.193ff.

under Dharmāditya and Gopacandra. The Ghugrāhātī grant¹ calls the governor Jīvadatta Antaraṅga and uparika. We learn from the Tippera copper plate² that the dūtaka (envoy) of the grant was the great state-officer Mahārāja-Mahāsāmanta Vijayasena, who had at least titular control of various high sounding offices. He was Mahāpratihāra (the chief officer superintending the doorkeepers of the royal palace),³ Mahāpūlupati (the great leader of the elephant force),⁴ Pañcādhikara-noparika (chief superintendent of five administrative offices)⁵ and Pātyuparika (in charge of pāti or accounts).⁶ Most probably Vijayasena was in charge of all these departments and was the chief officer of State during the reign of Vaṇya Gupta. A Basarh Seal⁷ shows that a provincial governor had his own Adhikarana (office or court), situated at his headquarters or adhithāna. It is also clear that he was directly responsible to the emperor, as he was appointed by him. It was the provincial governor who appointed the heads of the districts

1. EI., XVIII, p. 76.
2. IHQ., VI, pp. 45ff; SI., pp. 331ff.
3. SI., p. 33 n. 7.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. SI., p. 333, n. 7.
7. ASI., 1903-04, p. 103.

which were comprised in his own province.

The Mallasārul grant mentions a long list of other administrative officials and dignitaries,¹ viz., Kārttākr̥tika (possibly superintendent of state-affairs), Kumārāmātya (an executive officer of the same status as a kumāra or prince), Audraṅgika (from udraṅga, possibly a tax on permanent tenants, hence perhaps a tax officer); the Aurnasthānika (officer in charge of woollen articles), Agrahārika (owner of an agrahāra gift village belonging to a Brāhmaṇa or a god, or an officer superintending agrahāras), Bhogapatika (possibly the same as Bhogika, an officer connected with the stables), Tadāyuktaka (possibly an āyuktaka, a magistrate, appointed by particular officers like the visayapati), Hiranyasāmudāyika (head of the royal treasury or collector of revenue), Pattalaka (possibly a ruler of a territorial division called Pattalā), Āvasathika (possibly a superintendent of the avasathas or Dharmaśātās) Dēvadroni (officers

1. These titles are discussed more fully in Appendix A, pp. 359-369 below.

superintending the processions of idols of the temples or more probably, temple property).¹ These officers are mentioned in the inscription immediately after Vardhamānabhukti; hence, it appears that they held different administrative posts which were directly concerned with this bhukti. This copper plate also mentions a list of mahattaras or elders, and other important persons - mahattara Himadatta, an agrahārin of Ardhakaraka, mahattara Suvarṇyaśas of Nirvṛtavātaka, mahattara Dhana-svamin, an agrahārin of Kapisthavātaka, the mahattaras Śaṣṭhidatta and Śrīdatta etc. It seems that these mahattaras and agrahārins are quite well-known locally. It is also interesting to note that their names occur along with the names of the villages to which they belonged. It indicates that they were considerable persons in their respective localities and must have had some power also.

The district officers were usually known as viṣayapatis. Vetravarman was in charge of Koṭivarṣa Viṣaya from 124 to 128 G.E., he was appointed to this

1. SI., pp. 360ff. n. 9.

post by the provincial governor Cirātadatta (tan-niyuktaka Dāmōdarpur C.P. 1 and 2) in the reign of Budha Gupta, the same office was held by Saṇḍaka (Gaṇḍaka?), owing his appointment of Uparika-Mahārāja Jayadatta; and in the year 544 A.D.} this viṣaya was administered by Svayambhūdena, who was appointed to this post by Devabhaṭṭāraka, the bhukti-pati. The Baigrām copper-plate¹ seems to indicate that the district officer Kulavṛddhi was directly responsible to the Bhaṭṭāraka, who seems to be the King Kumāra Gupta I himself, because it is the common designation of the Gupta monarch. The names of four district officers are available from the Faridpur copper plates;² Viṣayapati Jajāva was appointed by Mahārāja Sthānudatta (Plate A), ^{as was} and Gopālasvāmī (Plate B) and after him Vatsapāla by Nāgadeva (Plate C) himself the officer in charge of Navyā-vakāśikā, enjoying the titles of Uparika and Mahāpratihāra. In the reign of Samācāradeva Pavittruka held this post of viṣayapati, his appointment having been confirmed by

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1. Bhaṭṭāraka-pād-ānuddhyātaḥ kumārāmātya-kulavṛddhir = etad-viṣay-adhikaraṇaṁ = ca. EI., XXI, p. 81.
 2. IA., 1910, pp. 195ff; JRAS., 1912, pp. 710ff; SI., pp. 350ff., Nos. 43, 44, 45. EI. XVIII, pp. 75. ff.

Jīvadatta, the Uparika in charge of the office at Navyāvakāśikā in Suvarṇa vīthī. It appears that there is one similarity between the Baigrām and the Vappaghoṣa-vāta grants,¹ in that in both the officer carrying on the administration of a viṣaya pays his respects directly to the sovereign. But it is not clear in the inscription, whether the duties, functions and status of Nārāyaṇabhadra, the viṣayapati of Vappaghoṣavāta were the same as those of ^{the} viṣayapatis of the other inscriptions. It is clear that Nārāyaṇabhadra is under direct obligations to the sovereign, and that he has under him an officer styled Mahāpratihāra to whom he issues orders to be carried out.

No detailed information is available regarding district administration. What little light is provided by our inscriptions about the administrative machinery is in connexion with the sale of lands. Like the officer in charge of the bhukti, the district officer too had his adhikaraṇa in his headquarters (adhiṣṭhāna-adhikaranam). An Adhikaraṇa is depicted in the Mṛcehakatika² with its

1. tat-pād-anudhyāta-Sāmanā-Nārāyaṇabhadra-viṣaya-Sambhogakālī. II., XVIII, p. 63. (Lines 2-3).
2. Act, IX.

building (mandapa) and staff such as the Adhikaranikas, the Adhikarana-bhojakas, the Śrēṣṭhī and the Kāyasthas, and it is reasonable to infer that the Viṣayapati's Adhikarana referred to in our inscriptions was of similar type. The responsibility for managing the affairs of the district Adhikarana lay in the hands of the district officer who was the deputy of the uparika. But he carried out his duties in collaboration with a board consisting of the nagaraśreṣṭhī¹ the most wealthy ~~man~~ ^{merchant} of the town, perhaps representing the rich urban population, the sārvavāha, the chief ^{Caravan} merchant, perhaps representing the various trade guilds, the prathamakulika the chief artisan, perhaps representing the various artisan classes, and the prathama kāyastha, the chief scribe, who may either have represented the kāyasthas as a class, or have been a government official in the capacity similar to that of a chief secretary of modern days. From 124 to 128 G.E. the district officer of Koṭivarṣa was assisted by Dhṛtipālāa as the Nagaraśreṣṭhī

1. For further consideration of these terms, see Appendix, A, pp. 365, 366, 368 below.

Bandhumitra as the Sārthavāha, Dhṛtimitra as the Prathama-kulika and Sambhupāla as the Prathama Kāyastha. The district officer mentioned in Dāmodarpur, Plate No. 4, was ayuktaka Śaṇḍaka (or Gaṇḍaka) in the reign of Budha Gupta and he carried out the business of the Adhikarana with Ṛbhupāla as the Nagaraśrēṣṭhī, Vasumitra as the Sārthavāha, Varadatta as the Prathama-kulika and Viprapāla as the Prathama-Kāyastha. Svayambhūdeva was the district officer in 544 A.D.; he conducted the business of the Adhikarana with his colleagues Ārya Ṛbhupāla, the Nagaraśrēṣṭhī, Sthānudatta the Sārthavāha, Matidatta the Prathama-kulika, and Skandapāla the Pratha^{ma}-kāyastha. The question can be put forward whether the Nagaraśreṣṭhī, the Sārthavāha, and the Prathama-kulika were elected by their respective communities or appointed by the government to the posts assigned to them in the Adhikarana. Nothing is mentioned in the inscriptions, so there is no definite answer to this question. It is interesting to notice that during the reign of Kumāra Gupta I, Budha Gupta and Viṣṇu Gupta (about a century A.D. 443-444 to A.D. 543-4), the administrative system of Koṭivarṣa viṣaya was stable. The inscriptions also indicate that the bhukti governors, the Viṣayapatis and the members of the

board of advisors were largely hereditary. It appears too from the Dāmodarpur inscriptions that only members of the Datta, Varman, Pāla and Mitra families served on the district board, and held high positions in the system of local Government.

We have seen above that the board of Advisors was mentioned in the Dāmodarpur copper plate Nos, 1 and 2 of Kumāra Gupta I but the Baigrām copper plate of the same king (128 G.E.) does not refer to ^{such a} the board of Advisors. Clearly the system of local Government was not uniform, even within a single bhukti. It seems that Koṭivarṣa viṣaya was a more important viṣaya than Pañcanagari and hence the government had to maintain the advisory board there.

The actual working of this system of provincial administration can be well illustrated by the inscriptions, which deal with transactions in land. The Dhanaidaha copper plate and Dāmodarpur copper plate No.3 show that the purchasers of any land had to approach the householders (kutumbīnah), the ^{office under} ~~village in charge~~ of the eight families (clans) ^{villages} of the ~~(grām-āsthakulādhikarāna)~~ and the elders of the village

(mahattaras) before any transaction could be completed.¹

Some further light on the administration of this ^{region} ~~council~~ can be obtained from the Pāhārpur plate dated A.D.479. At the time of purchasing a piece of land, a certain definite procedure was followed. First the intending purchaser informed the local government of his desire to purchase a certain piece of land, the aim and object of his desire and his willingness to pay the proper price for it - according to the prevailing rate.² Thus we learn from the Pāhārpur copper plate that Nāthasārman a Brāhmaṇa and Rāmī, his wife, approached the district officer and the city-council, headed by the chief of the merchants, at Puṇḍravardhana with the request that, in accordance with the procedure prevalent in the locality, they might be allowed to deposit three dīnāras in return for $1\frac{1}{2}$ kulyavāpa of land distributed among four different villages, to be endowed in perpetuity for the maintenance of requisities for the worship of the Jain Arhats, and for the construction of a rest-house at

1. EI.,XVII,pp.347 ff.

2. IA.,1910,3 plates, pp. 193-216; EI.,XV,pp.130ff; EI.,XX,pp.59ff; EI.,XXI,pp.78ff.

the vihāra of the Jaina preceptor Guhanandi at Vāṭa Gohāṭi.

Then the Council consulted the record-keepers (Pustapāla) presided over by Divākarānandin, who announced that there was no objection to the transaction, especially as, besides "bringing some revenue to the treasury, it would entitle His Majesty to a sixth share of the religious merit accruing from the endowment."¹ It is clear from all the land grants that the Pustapālas used to make the necessary enquiries as to the ownership of the land, the aim and object of the intending purchase and so on. Usually there was more than one record-keeper.² In one of the Dāmodarpur copper plates³ there is a hint that there may have been a slight disagreement between the Viṣayapati and the Pustapālas (Viṣayapatināṇa kaścid virodhaḥ). It appears that objections might be raised either by the office of the Pustapāla or by the district governor. But if there was no disagreement, the office of the

1. EI.,XX,p.64.

2. S.K.Maity,Economic Life of India in Gupta period, App.ii,p.201.

3. EI.,XV.,p.143, (Plate No.5).

Pustapālas gave its consent to the sale of the land.

After receiving the consent from the office of the Pustapālas the applicant paid in cash the usual price of land to the district office. The land was inspected by the local Council and it was demarcated according to the standard measure; and lastly the local council declared the sale and recorded the transfer of the land.¹ The declaration was also an important part of the procedure. It was generally held in the presence of the headman of the village and the local Brāhmaṇs, respectable householders (kuṭumbikas), royal officers and so on. In their presence also the land was measured according to the local custom, and the boundaries were fixed. After all these formalities, the purchaser had the legal title to his new land.

The Faridpur copper plate² of the time of Dharmāditya gives all the details of the procedure. It may be paraphrased thus - In the reign of Mahārājādhirāja Dharmāditya when Mahārāja Sthāṇudatta was the governor

1. EI., XX., p. 59.

2. IA., 1910, pp. 195-196. (Plate A).

in the province of Navyāvakāśikā, and ^{when,} under his appointment, the Viṣayapati Jajava was administering the district of Vārakamaṇḍala, a person named Vāṭabhoga approached the local district administration (adhikaraṇa) and the people (prakṛtayaḥ) headed by the leading men of the district (viṣaya-mahaṭṭara) and applied for the purchase from them of a plot of cultivated land (kṣetra-khaṇḍam) by offering the due price. On submission of this application the Pustapāla first determined the matter and made a report that in that district the custom prevailed of selling cultivated land by means of copper-plate documents at the rate of four dīnāras for each kulyavāpa and that the king was to receive only the sixth part of the punya of the donation according to law in such transactions. The applicant's prayer was granted, twelve dīnāras were deposited by Vāṭabhoga, and cultivated land measuring three kulyavāpas was sold to him. The land was measured according to the standard measure of eight or nine reeds by the hand of Śivacandra. This document has a seal attached to it bearing the emblem of Śrī or Lakṣmī with the legend - Vārakamaṇḍala-viṣayādhikarṇasya, ~~in~~ the seal of "the court of the district of Vārakamaṇḍala." This

seal seems to be also important, as it proves the legal purchase made by the purchaser.

It appears from the Faridpur copper plate (A), that, besides the adhikarāṇa, where the viṣayapati was engaged, there was an assembly of viṣaya-mahattaras of whom 18 are mentioned by name, followed by other less important men (purogāh prakṛtyaś-ca). These leading men of the district along with others who attended the adhikarāṇa of ^{the} Viṣayapati must have been important people. Their exact functions are not stated. Probably they formed a sort of local council, with less power and influence than the council of four at Koṭivarṣa, which was called together on such occasions to give formal approval to the transactions of the local officer in charge. From the Faridpur copper plates, including the Ghugrāhati grant, we do not get any definite information about the adhikarāṇas of the bhukti or grāma; but there are specific references to the adhikarāṇa of the Viṣaya or district. Here the authoritative body consisted of a number of mahattaras and business men (vyavahārins or Vyāpārins)¹ and also other leading

1. Faridpur C.P. of the time of Gopacandra, (18th year). IA., 1910, p. 204ff; EL., XVIII, pp. 75ff; SI., No. 45., p. 358.

citizens.¹ It has been suggested that the mahattaras represented the landed gentry and the Vyavahārins, the industrial or commercial interests of the district.² This explanation is plausible, but cannot be regarded as certain.

There was a staff of record-keepers whose services were available to the Viśayādhikarāna. Rṣidatta, Jayanandī and Vibhudatta were the record-keepers consulted by the adhikarāna in the Dāmodarpur copper plates³ Nos. 1 and 2; Patradāsa in the copper plate No. 3 dated A.D. 482; Viṣṇudatta, Vijayanandī and Sthānūnandī in Plate No. 4; and Naranandī, Gopadatta and Bhaṭānandī in Plate No. 5. These copper plates show that the posts of the Pustapālas were largely hereditary and were generally confined within two particular families, Datta and Nandī, for about a century (A.D. 443-4 to 543-4).

1. U.N. Ghoshal (Hindu Revenue System pp. 204-5) regards mahattaras, kutumbins, and even prakṛtis, not as "private individuals" but as "officials" and "administrative agents". This interpretation seems hardly possible, since it goes against the obvious meaning of most of the terms. Moreover, it is unlikely that there should be so many important officials in a comparatively small district.
2. IC., VI., 1939-40, p. 163.
3. EI., XV., pp. 130ff.

A vīthī adhikarāna consisting of mahattaras, agrahārins, three khādgīs (swordsmen) and one vāha-nāyaka (superintendent of conveyances) is referred to in the Mallasārul copper plate¹ grant of the time of Gopacandra. The two terms, khādgī and vāha-nāyaka are very obscure. The literal meaning of khādgī is swordsman. In our inscription, there are three such khādgīs and their names are mentioned along with the villages concerned. We may suggest that their main function was to maintain the village security and to protect the villagers' lives and property. The term vāha-nāyaka implies a leader of vehicles. Perhaps he was the owner of a number of carts and other vehicles which he let out to the peasants and others, or he may have been a merchant like the Sārthavāha of the Dāmodarpur plates. So far as the question of sales and gifts of lands was concerned, the adhikarāna of the vīthī performed the same functions, as were assigned to the viśaya-adhikarāna.

1. EI., XXIII, p. 157., 1935-36.

The land transaction took place according to the following procedure:—¹ Vijayasena approached the mahattaras and other notables of neighbouring villages and also the court of the vīthī (vīthī-adhikarāṇa). He expressed his wish to purchase eight kulyavāpas of land for the five sacrificial rites. The vīthī court and the elders (mahattaras) enquired into the matter and signified their approval, considering that "a sixth part of the religious merit will accrue to the Parama-bhaṭṭaraka, the king." The necessary amount of money in dīnāras was then paid at the vīthī court by Vijayasena as the price of the land, which was divided by the persons² appointed for the occasion. In this transaction a person named Subhadatta acted as a Dūtaka (envoy), the Sādhivīgrahika (officer of Peace and War) Bhōgaçandra prepared the draft, while the Pustapāla Jayadāsa was responsible for getting the copper-plate heated (tāpita)

1. Mallasārul C.P.; EI., XXIII., p. 159ff; SI., p. 359ff.

2. Vāra seems to refer to some official duty, as is possibly connected with the word kula-vāra = "arbitrator, witness" according to Pargiter. SI., p. 362, fn. 4.

and engraved. The literal meaning of this term Sāndhi-vigrahika is the minister of peace and war or a chief political minister.¹ This term occurs in several Gupta inscriptions.² It is stated in the Udayagiri, cave inscription, that Virasena Śāva came to Eastern Malwa in person accompanying the king, Candragupta II, who was seeking to conquer the whole world. Śāva was a minister of Candragupta II and was placed by his king in charge of the Department of Peace and War. It ^{Thus} appears that in the Gupta period the Sāndhi-vigrahika also accompanied the king in the battle-field. But the functions of the Sāndhi-vigrahika in the Mallasārul inscription are not clear. It is important to note that during the Gupta period there was no hard and fast distinction between the civil, military and judicial departments. Moreover the inscriptions do not mention any department separately. It would seem that one person might hold posts in administrative, judicial and military departments simultaneously.

It appears from several epigraphical records that

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1. M. Williams, Skt. Dictionary, p. 1060.
 2. Allāhābād Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta, CII., III, p. 6ff; SI., p. 260; Udayagiri Cave Inscriptions of Candragupta II, CII., III, p. 35; SI., p. 272.

prominent persons in villages had some share in the administration of local affairs, but their activity seems to have been limited. The Dāmodarpur Plate No.3 mentions the Grāmika (perhaps the village headman) the mahattaras, ^{and} the aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa. The same non-official element in local government was represented by Brāhmaṇas, kutumbins and mahattaras in another village.¹ The Dhanaidaha Grant mentions Mahattaras, Kutumbins and the aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa. We learn from the Dāmodarpur Plate²No.3 that a grāmika named Nabhaka expressed his wish to purchase some uncultivated (apraḍa) and unsettled (khila) land in a village called Caṇḍagrāma - the chief inhabitants of which were so informed by the mahattaras, the aṣṭakulādhikaraṇa, the Grāmikas and others from the head-quarters Paṭāśavṛṇḍaka. The applicants' prayer was granted on receipt of the price in coins according to the usual rate of the village and the land was given to him after being surveyed and inspected

1. e.g. Pāhārpur C.P., EI., XX, p.

2. EI., XV., pp. 114ff.

by the mahattaras. In this connection further light is thrown by the Dhanaidaha inscription.¹ This record shows that a person named Viṣṇu approached the Kuṭumbins, the mahattaras and the aṣṭakulādhikarāṇa and perhaps also the viṣaya-adhikarāṇa, though this is not mentioned, and expressed his wish to buy one kulyavāpa of cultivated land. At Palāśavṛṇḍaka, as shown in the Dāmodarpur copper plate No.3., where responsibility was shared between the grāmika, the adhikarāṇa-mahattaras and the Kuṭumbins, there was only one record-keeper, Patradāsa, who was consulted by those authorities. The village authorities who cooperated with the bhukti-staff in the Pāhārpur grant belonged to the same categories as those mentioned in the Dāmodarpur Plate No.3.

The Baigrām copper plate is the third source showing how an application received by a higher administrative office (the kumārāmātya and the Viṣayādhikarāṇa of Pañcanagarī), was passed on to the authorities of a village, such as Brāhmaṇas and Kuṭumbins for necessary help in giving effect to it.

1. EI., XVII, pp.346ff.

As regards the payment of the price, it appears that the intending purchaser had to pay in the adhikarana. The measurement and demarcation of the land took place after the price for the same land had been collected (upasaṅgrhya or ayikṛta) following the pustapālas' approval of the proposed transaction. As far as the records of the Guptas are concerned, the same authorities that received applications, forward them to the pustapālas for scrutiny and opinion. It appears also from the Gupta records that the state maintained a regular department for land-measurement, land-survey and land revenue: this was staffed by pustapālas whose literal function was record-keeping. They carefully kept record of all land transactions and were mainly responsible for the fiscal administration, at least in Bengal.¹ It was evidently the district government of Koṭivarṣa to which prices were paid for transactions recorded in Dāmodarpur copper plates Nos. 1,2 and 5; but it was the local government of Palāśavṛndaka, (the mahattaras, the grāmika, and

1. S.K.Maity, op.cit., p.35.

the aṣṭakula-adhikarana) to which Nābhaka, the Grāmika submitted the price of the land situated in a different locality. It is recorded in the Fāhārpur copper plate that the adhikarana of Pundravardhana received an application for the purchase of some land and arranged for its scrutiny by the pustapāla and directed the local staff to collect the price from the purchasers. The Mallasārul grant shows that the price for the land purchased by Vijayasena from the adhikarana of the Vakkattakavīthī was paid to the same authorities.¹ Thus it appears that the local Government had to collect the price of land from the purchasers.

One of the important duties of the local administrators in connexion with these land-sales was to take the utmost care in measuring accurately each piece of land sold. Several inscriptions do not mention by whom the measurement was carried out, but in one or two cases the name of the officer who actually measured the land is mentioned. In the three copper plate grants of Dharmāditya

1. EI., XXIII, p. 157.

and Gopacandra it is stated that the transferred land was measured by the hasta (hand, cubit) of the upright Śivacandra.¹ The Baigrām copper plate² refers to the fact that land was measured according to the length of the hasta of Darvikarma. It is clear that Śivacandra and Darvikarma were not the Pustapālas, since their names are mentioned separately in each case. They may have been surveyors or local officers in some way connected with this fiscal department of the government.³ It is also clear from the inscriptions of Dharmāditya and Gopacandra that only the hasta of Śivacandra was accepted as standard in the locality. It appears to us that Śivacandra and Darvikarma were probably the keepers of measuring sticks recognised locally as standard, and they may have been responsible for all official land measurement in the district.⁴

Every piece of land to be sold had to be measured according to a fixed system. What was the exact measurement

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1. IA., 1910, pp. 195, 201, 204. (hasta = forearm)
 2. EI., XXI, p. 82.
 3. S.K. Maity, op. cit., p. 36.
 4. Ibid.

of a kulyavāpa in terms of modern systems is not certainly known.¹ The term aṣṭaka-navaka-naṭābhyām apaviñcya² (having been measured by two reeds of eight and nine) which is mentioned in several Gupta epigraphs of Bengal, has not yet been satisfactorily interpreted. Dikshit³ states that the modern system in Bengal and Assam is to measure the land by nalas or reeds of a definite length in cubits, differing in different localities, and suggests that the terms ṣaṭka, aṣṭaka and navaka compounded with the word nala imply rods of six, eight and nine cubits respectively. D.C.Sircar⁴ supports his view.

Pargiter,⁵ on the contrary, suggested that in the past the number of cubits constituting a nala varied widely from five to sixteen and interpreted the term aṣṭaka - navaka - naṭābhyām apaviñcya as referring to a plot eight reeds in breadth by nine in length. He further believed that this area constituted the kulyavāpa. Basak⁶

1. S.K.Maity, op.cit. p.38.

2. IA., 1910, pp.193, 215, Plates A.B.C; EI., XV, plate 3, p.136; XVII, p.347; XXI, p.82

3. EI., XX, p.63, fn.2.

4. SI., p.349, fn.2 and elsewhere.

5. IA., 1910, p.215.

6. AMSJ., III, p.494.

substantially agrees with Pargiter, believing that the phrase refers to the measuring off of rectangular plots of land using only one rod, each plot being eight nalas in breadth by nine in length. R.N.Saletore¹ and B.C.Sen² hold a slightly different opinion. According to B.C.Sen "Two Nalas were used in turn for the measurement of length and breadth respectively, one measuring nine cubits and the other eight. The element astaka as well as navaka in the compound can well be taken as representing the size of the nala employed in each case, and the custom of measuring by hasta-standard having been shown in some inscriptions to have been current, it is evident that whether the compound is preceded by hasta or not, the same practice must have been followed throughout. Taking the average measurement of a hasta to be 19 inches³ the unit represented by the astaka and navaka nalas will correspond to an oblong area of $19 \times 8 \times 19 \times 9 = 25,992$ sq.inches or $180\frac{1}{2}$ sq.ft." This view is not supported

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1. Saletore R.N. Life in the Gupta Age, p.357.
 2. B.C.Sen, op.cit. p.520.
 3. Pargiter, IA., 1910, p.215.

by S.K.Maity¹ and he writes, "Even today the practice of measuring land by rods is quite common in Indian villages, but normally only one rod is used for this purpose. To employ one for measuring length and another for measuring breadth would be most confusing and inconvenient." It appears that Dr.Maity's view is more reasonable than those of the others. We also believe that in Gupta times, as at the present day, land was measured by only one rod.

Gold coins were in use throughout the Gupta empire including Bengal. This is proved not only by actual specimens which have been discovered but also by references in the Gupta records to dīnāras used in payment of prices of lands. Silver money was also in vogue; for example, in the Baigrām Copper Plate there is a reference to rūpakas; eight rūpakas are equivalent to a half-dīnāra, which means that one dīnāra was worth sixteen rūpakas.

1. S.K.Maity's Economic Life of India in Gupta period, p.37.

CONCLUSION

We bring our work to a close by giving a rapid survey of the history of Bengal from prehistoric times to cir. A.D. 750.

Hitherto most historians have believed that before Mauryan times the people of Bengal were uncivilised dwellers among swamps and marshes and remained outside Vedic culture. But the recent archaeological discoveries at Pandu Rajar Dhibi have called for some revision of this view. The ancient mound has shown by undisputed archaeological evidence that at least some people of Bengal were highly civilised even before the Āryans entered the country.

It is clear that by the time of the invasion of Alexander in 326 B.C. Bengal was civilised, for by this time the Gangaridai and the Prasii were the most important political force in India, under Mahāpadma Nanda, and it appears that the former people were the inhabitants of Bengal. Under the Mauryan rulers Bengal apparently enjoyed the blessings of good government. The Brāhmī inscription of Mahāsthān refers to Pundranagara as a prosperous city, with a state store house filled with money and corn for distribution in time of emergency. After the death of Aśoka the process

disintegration asserted itself, ^{and} much of North India fell a prey to the invasions of the Greeks, the Sakas and ultimately the Kuṣāṇas. The Kuṣāṇas established an extensive empire with their centre in the extreme north-west of India. During this period, the political life of Bengal is obscure. There is no evidence that the Kuṣāṇas ruled over Bengal. From the accounts of the Periplus it appears that Bengal maintained her active overseas trade with South India, Ceylon and China in the first century A.D. Ptolemy also mentions that Tamluk was a great port. In the first two Christian centuries, the social and cultural life of Bengal was fairly advanced.

Under Gupta rule Bengal rose to become an important province. The age of the Imperial Guptas is generally considered to be the golden age of India. During this period India was under a strong benevolent central government, which brought peace, wealth, ^{and} prosperity for a considerable time. We learn from the account of Fa-hsien that the people of the Middle Kingdom were "numerous and happy".¹

The Gupta Age was, no doubt, a period of efficient political administration, and political stability was firmly rooted. The maintenance of law and order was by no means

1. Legge, p. 42.

the sole concern of government. This period is also remarkable for its trade and commerce. Fa-hsien¹ states that in the east Tāmralipti (modern Tamruk in West Bengal) was the great emporium of trade. The period was one of wide religious toleration. The Imperial Gupta monarchs embraced Brahmanism and styled themselves Paramabhāgavatas or Paramadaivatas. But they also patronized Buddhism and Jainism. The people of the period enjoyed full liberty of making perpetual endowments to temples or monasteries of all sects. This aspect of Indian religious life was, however, by no means peculiar to the Gupta period.

The break up of the Gupta empire, the invasions of the Hūnas, and the sudden entry and exit of Yaśodharman on the political stage gave great shocks to Magadha. In the first half of the sixth century A.D. south and east Bengal shook off the suzerainty of the Guptas and attained importance as an independent kingdom under local rulers who assumed the title Mahārājādhirāja. In this period we find the rise of several powerful feudatory principalities in the heart of the Gupta empire. Among them the Maukharis and the later Guptas were the most powerful. There was a long drawn out

1. Legge, p. 100.

struggle between them for the possession of Magadha and North Bengal.

Towards the close of the sixth century A.D. Gauda rose to power under Śaśāṅka, who freed Bengal from the yoke of the latter Guptas. There is no doubt that he was a great political figure at this time. Under his strong rule peace and prosperity existed in Bengal for a considerable period. It appears that his ambition was to conquer the whole of Northern India and to rule an Empire like that of the Imperial Guptas; but his aim was baffled with the rise of Harṣavardhana and Bhāskaravarman. The death of Śaśāṅka was followed by a period of anarchy and confusion. His death gave a chance to his rival Harṣa to establish his power over the eastern part of Northern India. Harṣa was a remarkable monarch. In his time Buddhism greatly flourished. His death was followed by another period of chaos. The break up of his vast empire, no doubt led to the rise of a number of independent states on its ruins. His death gave a chance to the latter Guptas to rule over Magadha and Bengal, but their power came to an end with the rise of Yaśovarman of Kanauj. The period from the death of Harṣa to the rise of the Pālas can be regarded as one of turmoil. Bengal faced

a series of foreign invasions from Yaśovarman of Kanauj, Lalitāditya of Kashmir and Jayavardhana of ^{The} Saila dynasty of Orissa. According to Tāranātha, the death of Lalitacandra followed a period of anarchy and confusion and there was no king ruling over either Gauḍa or Vaṅga and every Kṣatriya, Grandee, Brāhmaṇa and merchant was a king in his own house. The contemporary records also describe the political condition of Bengal in the middle of the eighth century A.D. as mātsya-nyāya. This lamentable condition of political disintegration came to an end after the election of Gopāla in the middle of the eighth century A.D.

Thus during our period Bengal entered the fold of Āryan civilisation and became an important factor in Indian politics. Possibly we should look on this earliest phase of the history of Bengal, when so much is still unknown and obscure, as the preliminary stages of the process which brought about the rise of the great Pāla Empire of Bengal and Magadha, when in most respects the region attained the high water-mark of its importance, both political and cultural. At the end of our period the greatest days in the history of Bengal were approaching, with the reigns of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, when the power of Bengal was felt as far afield as Kanauj,

and when her teachers carried the message of Buddhism to the cold highlands of Tibet.

APPENDIX A

Short notes on officers and administrative
terms referred toⁱⁿ Bengal Copper plates

Adhikarāna

Court

Adhiṣṭhāna

District headquarters

Agrahārīna ^{for} (Agrahārikā) Mentioned in the Mallasārul Copper

Plate of the time of King Gopacandra. Holder of agrahāra lands i.e., lands offered as free gifts to Brāhmanas for their maintenance or settlement therein or for some religious purpose. Alternatively, he may be a superintendent of agrahāras. But the context of the term in the Mallasārul Plate suggests that the former interpretation is more probable in this case, since a number of agrahārīna-mahattaras are mentioned by name. (E.I., xxiii, p.159.)

Antaraṅga

Mentioned in the Ghugrāhāti inscription (E.I., XVIII, p.76), it is another title of the governor (uparika).

Aṣṭakulādhikarāna

R.D.Banerji¹ explained this as meaning a local officer who exercised authority over

1. JASB(NS) V, No.11, p.460.

eight villages, Basak¹ offered another interpretation stating that it means "an officer in the village having supervising authority over eight kulas".

N.N.Das Gupta² states that the expression Aṣṭakulāādhi-karaṇa should mean the Adhikaraṇa or judicial court in the village composed of (more or less) eight judges". This seems much more likely. This term appears in several Gupta inscriptions, e.g., the Dhanaidaha grant³ of the Kumāra Gupta I dated A.D. 432-33, and the Dāmodarpur plate⁴ of Budha Gupta, dated A.D. 482-83.

Audraṅgika

Mentioned in the Mallasārul

Copper Plate. Collector of udraṅga, which is probably a tax on permanent tenants. (U.N.Ghoshal, Hindu Revenue, System, p.210).

Aurnasthānika

Mentioned in the Mallasārul Copper

Plate. Officer in charge of woollen articles (IC., VI, p.160). The interpretation is the only one we can offer, since the word is obviously derived from ūrṇa ("wool").

But sheep are not widely reared in Bengal, and the

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1. EI., XV, p.137.
 2. IC., V, p.1111.
 3. EI., XV, p.135f.
 4. EI., XVII, p.347f.

climate is such that wool is little worn. It is surprising that this textile should require the attention of a special officer.

Avasathika

In the Mallasārul Copper Plate.

Probably the supervisor of the royal and other government buildings, including temples, rest-houses etc. (HBR., I, p. 284).

Ayuktaka

In the Dāmodarpur Copper Plate No. 4.

The district officer Saṇḍaka (or Gaṇḍaka) has this designation. Etymologically 'one appointed'.

Bhogabatika

The term Bhoga means enjoyment,

possessing, possession. The common meaning of this term is "lord of possession" a person in actual possession (of anything), (M. Williams Skt. Dictionary, p. 722).

D.C. Sircar is inclined to connect this officer ^{with the} Bhogapāla ^{in control of} ~~with~~ the stable (SI., p. 360, n. 9). The word is mentioned in the Mallasārul Copper Plate wherein the function of this officer is not stated. (EI., XXIII, p. 159ff). Possibly it means a local chief or landowner.

Cauroddharanika

A police inspector concerned with

the apprehension of thieves, robbers and brigands.

His main function was to maintain the security of the village and to protect the villagers' lives and

property. The word is mentioned in the Mallasārul Copper Plate. (EI.,XXIII,p.159ff).

Devadronī-Sambaddha Possibly an officer entrusted with the care and inspection of temples and sacred tanks. Dronī normally means a bucket or wooden vessel and its significance here is not clear. This term appears in the Mallasārul Copper Plate. (EI.,XXIII,p.159ff).

Hiranyasāmudāyika Probably collector of taxes paid in cash. D.C.Sircar takes him as the head of the royal treasury or collector of revenue. (SI.,pp.360ff. fn.9). Mentioned in the Mallasārul Copper Plate (EI.,XXIII,p.159ff).

Kartakṛtika The meaning of this very obscure term may be an officer in charge of manufactures. If this interpretation is correct, it will indicate that the provincial government exercised some sort of control over the industrial life of the people. (HABI.,p.498).

Khādgis In the Mallasārul Copper Plate (EI.,XXIII,p.157). The common meaning is swordsmen, and their names are mentioned along with the villages

concerned. We may suggest that, exactly the same as Cauroddhar^aṇika, they were armed guards or watchmen protecting their villages from robbers.

Kula-vāra.

The primary meaning of vāra is a person's "turn" or "proper place", and vāra-kṛta would thus mean "one appointed in turn" or "one appointed in a place". (EI., XXIII, p.156, fn.8) In the Ghugrahāti Copper Plate of Samācāradeva certain persons are said to have been appointed as kulavāras and in a Faridpur Copper Plate of the time of Gopacandra we have a reference to Kulavāras who are acquainted with administrative affairs. The word kula-vāra has been taken by Pargiter to mean a referee or an arbitrator. (IA., 1910, p.205, n.49).

Kumārāmātya

The term kumārāmātya is mentioned in the Dāmodarpur Copper Plate as a title of the district officer, Vetravarman. It was rather a title than the designation of an official with a special office or function, since it was applied to many officials with widely differing duties throughout the Gupta Empire. The earlier view that it meant a minister attached to the crown prince seems incorrect,

because this meaning is inappropriate in many contexts. It seems to have the sense of "princely minister", a minister of the highest rank.

Kutumbin

The common meaning of this word is an ordinary house-holder or family-man, the head of a kutumba or family. Probably in our documents it implied the head of a respectable family of peasants or better type craftsmen.

Mahāpratihāra

The chief door-keeper, perhaps the chief of the palace police. Mentioned in the Gunaighar Copper plate inscription of Vainya Gupta (IHQ.,VI,p.53ff).

Mahattaras

The term Mahattara literally means the head or the oldest man in the village. According to Pargiter (IA.,XXXIX,p.213) "the Mahattaras were the men of position in the villages, the leading men". He even suggests that the word mātabbar or mātabar, a common title for the head-man of a village in East Bengal, is derived from this word. Ghoshal (op.cit.,p.205) regards mahattaras as officials and administrative agents and not as private individuals. It seems to us that Pargiter's

interpretation is more logical than Ghoshal's.

Mahattaras were village elders and not administrative agents.

Nagaraśreṣṭhin

The common meaning of this term is "the merchant of the town". The Śreṣṭhin was also a moneylender or banker. Basak (EI.,XV,p.128) interprets it in the Dāmodarpur Copper Plates as the most wealthy man of the town, perhaps representing the rich urban population. Professor A.L.Basham rightly noticed, "At all times until the coming of the Europeans, banking in India was a by-product of trading, and most śreṣṭhins had other sources of income besides moneylending. They appear as leading members of guilds, often fabulously wealthy." (The Wonder that was India, p.222) In our inscriptions the Nagara-śreṣṭhin was ~~also~~ a member of a Board of Advisers which helped the Viṣayapati (district officer) in controlling local affairs.

Pilupati

Pīlu (originally Persian) = elephant. Pilupati = master of the elephant force or keeper of the elephants. The Mahāpīlupati, mentioned in the Gunaighar Copper Plate (IHQ.,VI,p.53ff) is probably the chief officer in charge of the

royal elephant force.

Prathamakāyastha

The literal meaning of this word is the chief scribe, who may either have represented the kāyasthas as a class, or have been a government official in the capacity similar to that of a chief Secretary of modern days. As the word occurs with the nagaraśreṣṭhī, the sārvadhāna and the prathamakulika as the title of a member of the local council of Koṭivarsa it appears that he was not a salaried official, and therefore we favour the former interpretation.

Prathamakulika

The common meaning of this word is a chief artisan. It is mentioned in the Dāmodarpur Copper Plates, wherein the Prathamakulika was a member of the local Board of Advisers. In the records his functions are not stated. It seems that he may have been a representative of the different artisan classes of the locality.

Purapālōparika

Mentioned in the Gunaighar Inscription of Vainya Gupta (IHQ., VI, p. 53ff). The chief police officer of the royal city. (SI., p. 333 fn. 7).

Pustapālas

Local officers, referred to in almost all Gupta Copper Plates in Bengal. They are the official record-keepers. It is clear from the inscriptions that the pustapālas used to make the necessary investigations as to the ownership of the land, the aim and object of the intending purchaser and so on. The government would sanction land-sales only after these record-keepers had received the applications from the purchasers and they determined the title to the land under proposal of transfer, and sent their report to the local government. Some districts had three or more pustapālas while others had only one.

Sāadhanika

Mentioned in the Faridpur Copper Plate of Dharmāditya (IA., 1910, p. 495f). This term may have meant an agent of some sort in the court of justice. (SI., p. 351, fn. 5) The implication of the term seems to be one who carries out some special function. The term duhsādhasāadhanika occurring in later inscriptions (e.g. Khālimpur Plate of Dharmāpāla, EI., IV, p. 250, line 45), has been interpreted as an officer responsible for the apprehension of thieves, and this may have a similar meaning.

Sārthavāha

The normal meaning of this word is "a caravan trader". Basak (EI.,XV,p.128) interpreted it, in its occurrence in the Dāmodarpur Copper Plates, as implying the chief merchant of the district, perhaps representing the various guilds. Ghosal (Hindu Revenue System,p.202) gave a similar interpretation. Evidently, however, the Sārthavāha took part in the council of Koṭivarṣa not as representative of the merchants in general, who would presumably be covered by the nagaraśreṣṭhin, but of those who traded with other parts of the land.

Uparika

Etymologically "one placed above, in charge". A provincial governor, probably also used in the sense of a superior officer. But in the Dāmodarpur Copper Plates this term is used as a title of the bhukti governor, (e.g. Uparika Cīrāta-datta). In the Maurya and Gupta periods he was appointed directly by the King, and was often a member of the royal family.

Vāhanāyaka

The term vāhanāyaka implies a leader of vehicles. Probably he was the owner of a number of carts and other vehicles which he let out

to the peasants and others, or he may have been a merchant like the Sārthavāha of the Dāmodarpur Copper Plates. Mentioned in the Mallasarul Copper Plate (EI.,XXIII,p.159ff).

Viṣayapati

Governor of a viṣaya or district, the sub-division of a bhukti or province. He was not usually appointed from the centre, but by the provincial governor. "Like the District Officers of Indian Civil Service, they combined judicial and administrative functions". (Basham,op.cit.,p.103).

Vyāpārakāraṇḍaya

This term is mentioned in the Farīdpur inscription of the time of Dharmāditya (IA.,XXXIX,p.200f). The common meaning of Vyāpāra is trade. Pargiter interprets the word vyāpārakāraṇḍaya as one who has to regulate trade. It appears from the inscription that he was not so important a business man as the Nagaraśreṣṭhin and the Sārthavāha, who were the members of a Board of Advisers.

APPENDIX B

Coins of the Period.

The use of metallic coins as a medium of exchange marks an important stage in the development of civilisation. When these metallic coins were first introduced in Bengal is not yet known, but there is no doubt that coins were used as a medium of exchange several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. The silver and copper punch-marked and cast coins, dating back to the pre-Christian era, are the earliest coinage of Bengal. We have already discussed this point on our Second Chapter. The Mahāsthān Brāhmī inscription¹ dated in the third century B.C. mentions coins called Gaṇḍaka and Kakanika which should be provided to the people at the time of emergency². Moreover, we learn from the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea that a gold coin known as Caltis was in current use in the market-town of Gange in the first century A.D.² No gold punch-marked coins have been discovered, and we cannot

1. See p. 75 f.

~~2. See p.~~

2. Periplus, p. 47.

identify the caltis with certainty. The earliest Indian ruler to mint gold coins regularly was the Kuṣāṇa Vīma Kadphises, and assuming an early date (c.50 A.D.) for this ruler it is just possible that the caltis was the Kuṣāṇa gold dīnāna.

A few gold coins of the Kuṣāṇa kings have been discovered in Bengal; but we cannot say whether they were regularly used as a medium of exchange. We have no positive evidence that the Kuṣāṇas ruled over Bengal, and the coins might have come by way of trade.

The discovery of a large number of Gupta coins, both of gold and silver, in almost every part of Bengal, shows that they circulated widely. The earliest Gupta coins follow the standard of their Kuṣāṇa prototypes,¹ and the weights of Samudra Gupta's coins agree well with the weights of the late Kuṣāṇa coins of the third century A.D. which generally vary from 118 to 123 grains and the average standard may be defined as of 121 grains. But towards the close of the reign of Skandha Gupta the coinage of the Guptas became much heavier, reaching an average of

1. Cunningham's 'Coins of the Mediaeval India', pp.14-15.

144 to 146 grains, while the gold content decreased to about 70 grains.¹ This was probably because of financial stringency.

The Gupta Inscriptions mention two varieties of coins, the dīnāra and rūpaka, as media of exchange in purchasing land. It is generally accepted that the former (derived from the Latin denarius) denotes the gold, and the latter, the silver coins of the Gupta emperors.

Hoard.

The Kālighāt hoard² was found in 1783 at Kālighāt, on the eastern bank of the Hugli, near Calcutta. No information is available about the exact contents of this hoard, but its discoverer seems to have given about 200 of its coins to Warren Hastings, the Governor General of India. These coins were sent to the Directors of the East India Company in London, who presented 24 of them to the British Museum, nearly an equal number to the Museum of

1. Coins of Medieval India, pp. 15-16.

2. JASB., 1884, Pt. I, p. 150; Allan, Gupta Coins, p. CXXIV.

Mr. Hunter and some pieces to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and to the Public Library at Cambridge. The coins of this hoard are described by Wilson as being of rude execution and debased metal. Hence it appears that it consisted mostly of the issues of the later Gupta emperors.

The Hugli hoard¹, found near Hugli in 1883, consisted of 13 coins, as follows:-

1.	Samudra Gupta	- Javelin type or standard type.	1
2.	Candra Gupta II	- Archer, Class II	5
3.	Kumara Gupta I	- Archer	3
	Mahendra		
	" " "	- Horseman to right	2
	" " "	- Horseman to left	1
	" " "	- Lion - Trampler	1
			<hr/>
Total =			13

1. JASB., 1884, p.152, Allan, op.cit., p.cxxvii.

Jessore hoard¹

This hoard was found at Muhammadpur near Jessore. It included gold and silver coins of Candragupta II, Kumāragupta I and Skandagupta. Among the gold coins, there was one coin of the Rājātilā type of Samācāradeva, one of Śaśāṅka, and one belonging to the class of later imitations of the Gupta gold coins.

Other finds of coins.

Besides these important hoards a large number of Gupta coins have been found in different parts of Bengal.

Samudragupta's spearman type² was first found in Bengal. It was discovered at the village of Guākhola, at Koṭalipādā.³ Gold coins of Skandagupta were found in the same place.⁴ A gold coin of Skandagupta was found by a Muhammedan cultivator in a field near an ancient site in the Bogra district of Bengal.⁵ This coin is interesting because of its definitely known provenance in North Bengal. Gold coins of Skandagupta known to have been found in

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1. Smith, Coinage of the Gupta Dynasty, p.49; Allan, Gupta Coins, p.lcxxvii; JASB.1852, pp.401-2; Altekar, op.cit. p.356.
 2. JBORS., V, p.82 (1919).
 3. JASB., (NS) XIX, (1923), p.N.57.
 4. Ibid.
 5. JNSI., (1945) VII Pts. I and II, pp.13ff.

Bengal are very few in number. One Archer type gold coin of his was found near Mahanada in the Hugli district.¹ One king and Lakṣmī type coin of Skanda Gupta came from Midnapur² and another came from Faridpur district;³ the coin from Faridpur district is said to be of an unrecorded type. R.P.Chanda does not mention the metal but Banerji declares it to be gold. Neither of them, however, describes the coin.

No coins of Candragupta I have been found in Bengal. His son and successor Samudra Gupta issued several different types of gold coins, they consisted of the Standard and the Archer types; the Battle-axe and the Aśvamedha types; the Tiger slayer and the Lyrist types. The Hugli hoard produced only one standard type coin of Samudra; and other types have not been found in Bengal. The Standard type coins may be divided into three classes; Class I where the biruda is Prākrama; Class II where it is Vikrama and Class III where we see the type imitated by a Kuṣāṇa feudatory

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1. Proc.ASB., 1882, p.91; JRAS., 1889, p.112; Smith CCIM, I, p.115, fn.1.
 2. Smith CCIM, I, p.127, No.7a.
 3. R.P.Chanda, Gaudarājamaṭa, p.5; R.D.Banerji, BI., I, p.71.

of the emperor.¹

Candra Gupta II, the son and successor of Samudra Gupta, issued a large number of gold coins. His coins also consisted of the Standard and the Archer types, the Lion-Slayer and the Horseman types, the Chhatra and Couch types and King-and-Queen-on-Couch type. Among these types the Archer type is the most frequently found. Out of the 983 coins of this emperor found in the Bayana hoard, 798 belonged to the Archer type.² The Hugli hoard produced five Archer type coins (Class II).³

The coins of this type vary in size from .75" to 9". They were issued to three weight standards, 121, 124 and 127 grains;⁴ of these the first is the most common and is found all over the Gupta empire. This type of coin is divided into two classes - Class I and Class II. On the Class I coins, the King is in Kuṣāṇa coat and trousers, and the Goddess Lakṣmī, on the reverse is seated on a throne;⁵ on the Class II coins, on the obverse the king is seen

1. C.G.E., p.47.

2. C.G.E. p.91.

3. JASB., 1884, p.152.

4. C.G.E., p.91.

5. Allan, op.cit., Plate VI 1-13; Altekar, op.cit. Pl.IV.

wearing a dhōṭī instead of trousers and on the reverse the Goddess is always seated on a lotus,¹ and only this type of coins are found, in the Hugli hoard, in Bengal.

Candra Gupta II also issued silver coins which are fairly close copies of the Kṣatrapa silver issues current in Western India. He issued these coins chiefly for the use of Western countries, but a few have been found in Bengal.

Kumāra Gupta I son and successor of Candra Gupta II issued various types of gold and silver coins. They consisted of the Archer, the Horseman, the Lion-slayer, the Tiger-slayer, the Rhinoceros-slayer, the Aśvamedha, the Kārtikeya Apratigha, the Lyrist and the King and Queen types. Among these types three of the Archer, three of the Horseman and one of the Lion Trampler types were found in the Hugli hoard. The Archer types, which were most popular with Candra Gupta II was also issued by Kumāra Gupta I in large numbers.

The Archer type of Candra Gupta II, Class I, shows the goddess on the reverse seated on the throne, as on the

1. C.G.E., p.96, (Plate V).

Kuṣāṇa prototype. This motif does not appear on the Archer type of his son; there the Goddess is always seated on the lotus, as in Class II of Candragupta II. On the obverse the king is standing to the left, having an arrow in the right hand and bow in the left. On some coins Kumāra is written under the left arm and on the others the name is contracted into Ku. On some coins there is neither Kumāra nor Ku, but the attribution of these coins becomes possible on account of the biruda Śrī-mahendra on the reverse.

The Horseman type of Kumāra Gupta I, is the commonest type of this king. The obverse is more or less the same as that of the Horseman type of his father; the King is riding a horse to right or left, sometimes with and sometimes without weapons. The reverse in some cases, bears the motif of the goddess seated on a stool, but in others it introduces another motif, - the goddess feeding a peacock.

The Lion-trampler type shows the king trampling upon the lion; the legend is "Sākṣādīva narasiṃha Siṃhamahendro Jayatyaṇiṣam"; "Narasiṃha as it were incarnate, the lion-like Mahendra, is ever victorious".¹

1. CEG., p.187, CCGDBM, p.77.

Kumāra Gupta I, like his father Candra Gupta II, issued silver coins according to the Kṣatrapa prototype. They hardly differ in general characteristics from the silver coinage of Candra Gupta II. The silver coins were issued by him for the use of ^{the} Western Provinces, but some have been found in Bengal.

Skanda Gupta, the son and successor of Kumāra Gupta I, issued both gold and silver coins of various types. His coins consisted of the Archer, the King and Lakṣmī, the Chhatra and the Horseman types. The Archer type shows that the king is in coat and trousers and not in ^a dhotī; ^{he} faces left and holds the bow in the left hand at the top and the arrow in the right hand.¹ His name Skanda is written perpendicularly under the left arm.

A gold coin of Skanda Gupta which was found in the Bogra district in Bengal is the Archer type. It is said that the Mahanada and Midnapur coins of this king belong to his lighter standard and the coin from Bogra district seems to have been struck on the heavier Suvarna Standard.²

1. Altekar, op.cit., Plate XIV, (9-11).

2. JNSI, 1945, Pts. I & II, p.13.

The silver coins of this king consisted of the Bull, the Altar and the Madhyadeśa types.

No coins of Budha Gupta, the son and successor of Puru Gupta have been found in Bengal. Though this emperor had a long reign, his coinage, both in gold and silver, is very scarce.

Coins of Vainya Gupta were at one time mistaken for those of a non-existent Candra Gupta III. Rapson, who first read the name under the left arm as Candra, was not sure about his reading.¹ Allan admitted that the aksara Ca is certainly like Va and the second aksara is tya or ndra on BMC., Nos. 588, 589 and 590; but he felt that the reading Candra was fully justified, and assigned the coins to an unknown Candra Gupta III. The medial mātrā over the upper letter was taken by him to be a crescent.²

When the Gunaighar Copper plate disclosed the existence of a King named Vainya Gupta, D.C. Ganguli was the first to propose that the coins should be attributed to him,³ pointing out that the first letter was va rather than ca and the second letter could stand for a nya as well

1. Num. Chr., 1891, p. 57.

2. CCGDBM., liii-liv.

3. IHQ., 1934, p. 195.

as ndra with a mātrā for medial ai.

Coins of Narasimha Gupta in large numbers were found in the Kālighāṭ hoard.¹ One gold coin was recovered from Rānāghat in the Nadia district.² One coin was found in the Birbhum district of Bengal.³ The coinage of Narasimha Gupta is confined to the Archer type only. It can be divided into two classes,⁴ Class I where the metal is relatively purer and there is a circular legend Nara on the obverse, and Class II, where the metal is base, the execution crude and without the circular legend. Both the varieties have the letter gre or gu between the feet. The gold in the HMC coin No.560 of Class I was found to be 79% and in the BMC coin 565 of Class II 54%. It is important to note that none of the coins of Class I have so far been found in the Kālighāṭ hoard.⁵ On the coins of this king the akṣara gre or gu appears on the coins of both varieties. Such letters occurred on the late Kuṣāṇa coins. But they were discontinued by the early

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1. JASB.,1884,Pt.I,p.150.
 2. Proc.ASB.,1885,p.65.
 3. DKM.,p.85.
 4. CCGDBM,p.147ff.
 5. CGE.,p.270.

Gupta emperors.¹ Why they were introduced by Narasimha Gupta and continued by most of his successors and what was their importance is not yet known.

Narasimha Gupta was succeeded by his son Kumāra Gupta III of the Bhītari seal. Most of his coins come from the Kālighaṭ hoard. His coins are divided into two classes, Class I and Class II. Coins of Class I have less alloy,² and coins of Class II contain more. It seems that coins of Class II type may have issued during a period of turmoil possibly caused by Yaśodharman of Mandasor. The coins of Kumāra Gupta III are all in gold only and confined to the Archer type. Coins of Class I have no letters between the feet of the King and have an alloy of 29% gold only,³ the circular legend is off the flan and the reverse legend is Kramāditya.⁴ Coins of Class II have letters between the feet and have 46% alloy.⁵ The circular legend is Mahārājādhirāja-Śrī-Kumāra Gupta-Kramādityaḥ. The reverse legend is Śrī-

1. CGE., p. 270.

2. Coin No. 571 of the BMC. belonging to this class has an alloy of 21% only.

3. CGE., p. 272.

4. CCGEBM., p. 140.

5. CGE., p. 272.

kramāditya and not merely kramāditya.¹

The Archer type of Kumāra Gupta III can be distinguished from Class II of the same type of Kumāra Gupta I. On both coins, we have the letter ku under the arm. But there is a difference in weight; the coins of Kumāra Gupta I weigh only about 124 grains, while those of Kumāra Gupta III are at least 20 grains heavier.² The biruḍa on the reverse of the one is Mahendra, while that on the other is kramāditya. Smith had suggested that the coins of Class I may be the issues of Kumāra Gupta I,³ but the reverse legend kramāditya goes against that theory. The biruḍa of Kumāra Gupta I was always Mahendra or Mahendraāditya and never kramāditya.

Viṣṇu Gupta, a son of Kumāra Gupta III,⁴ issued gold coins of the Archer type. Most of his coins are known to have belonged to the Kālighāt hoard.⁵

Viṣṇu of these coins can be differentiated from

1. CGE., pp. 272-273.

2. Ibid.

3. JRAS., 1889, p. 94.

4. JNSI., III, pp. 103-4.

5. CGE., p. 280.

Viṣṇu Gupta of the later Gupta dynasty, who ruled from c.A.D. 695 to 715.¹ No coins of the later Gupta Kings have so far come to light.

The coins of Viṣṇu Gupta weigh between 147 and 151 grains; their size is rather small; it varies between .75" and .8". His coins are heavily adulterated; BMC., No. 594 was found to contain an alloy of 57%. Between the king's feet there is a letter ru. Under the king's left arm, we have the legend Viṣṇu, but there is no circular legend on the obverse. The king's biruḍa on the reverse is Śrī-Candrāditya.

Coins of Samācāradeva²

Only two coins of this king are known at present; one is of the Archer type and the other Rājāḷilā or throned king type. The latter was found on the banks of the Arunḅhālī river, near Muhammadpur in the Jessore district of Bengal, along with a gold coin of Śaśāṅka and

1. CGE., p. 280.

2. JASB., 1852, pp. 401-2. Plate XII; Allan, Catalogue of Gupta Coins, Introduction, Section 171.

another gold coin of the light-weight 'Imitation Gupta' type as well as silver coins of Candragupta II, Skandagupta and Kumāragupta. The provenance of the other coin (Archer type) is unknown. These two coins have been the centre of several controversies, and different views have been put forward on the reading of the name as well as of the birudā. It is of the common "Archer type" of the Gupta coins. The king's name occurs below the right arm, but V.A. Smith did not venture on a reading. A letter appears between the feet of the king which Smith¹ recognised as ca. The reverse legend he recognised as Narendravinata, with some hesitation. Of the Rājatilā coin, he read the name of the king on the obverse as Yamādha, written in characters of the close of the sixth century, and the reverse legend as Narendraditya. Allan² attributes the "Archer type" to a period earlier than that of Śaśāṅka. The king's name he reads hesitatingly as Sahā or Samāca

1. JASB (NS) 1923, p.n.54.

2. Allan, opcit., Introduction., p.lxi.

or Yamāca and wants to connect it with the Rājalilā coin, on which he reads the king's name as Yamādha. The reverse legend he reads on both the coins as Narendrāditya. The biruḍa on the reverse of both the coins was read as Narendrāditya by N.K.Bhattachali,¹ while R.D.Banerji² carefully examined these two coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta and opined that the legend was Narendravinata. The term Narendra in the legend refers to Śaśaṅka and the meaning of the whole legend is one who is humble to Narendra (i.e., Śaśaṅka). We have already rejected this view.³ There is no doubt that the name of the king is Samācā on both the coins. There is no solid evidence to convince us that Samācāradeva was a feudatory of Śaśaṅka. The legend must be Narendrāditya which is the biruḍa of Samācāradeva. It seems that Samācāradeva was a near predecessor of Śaśaṅka.

Śaśaṅka issued coins only in gold; his coins in

1. JASB.(NS), 1923, pp. 54ff. 2. ASI.AR., (1913-4), pp. 259-60.

3. See pp. ^{198,} 219-220.

silver and copper have not so far been found. His gold coins also are of a varying degree of purity, in some, the gold content is about 58% (e.g., B.M.No.608); in others it is very much less. Some of his coins are in copper plated with gold (e.g., B.M.Nos.610 and 611). The majority of his coins were issued to the Suvarṇa standard of 80 rattis or about 144 grains. He issued two types of gold coins - Suvarṇa type and half-Satamāna type. The legend on the obverse of his coins is Śrī-Śaśāṅka jayati; the legend on the reverse is Śrī-Śaśāṅkaḥ. The legend Śrī-Śaśāṅka jayati is written vertically behind the haunch of the bull; ja and ya are written below the bull.

Jaya(nāga) Prakāṇḍayaśas is known to us from some gold and gold plated coins found in Bengal.¹ His coins show that he was a paramabhāgavata or Vaiṣṇava; he discontinued the obverse of Śaśāṅka's coinage which showed Śiva standing by the Bull, and replaced it by the Archer type. The reverse is a close copy of Śaśāṅka's coins.

1. CGE., p.330.

The weight of his coins varies from 132 to 139 grains, and they are heavily adulterated; one of his coins in British Museum No.614, which was tested, had only 34% of gold.¹

His coinage is a close copy of the well-known Archer type of the Gupta dynasty. His biruḍa does not end with Aditya; it is Prakāṇḍayaśāh, 'of wide fame'.

1. CGE., p.331.

Standard Type coin of Samudra Gupta
(General description)

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location; Findspot & Refs.
Gold, Weight & size not specified Average about 117 grs. .8"	<p>King standing l., nimbate, wearing close-fitting cap, coat and trousers, ear-rings and neck-lace, holding in l. hand standard bound with fillet, offering incense with r. hand on an altar at his feet, behind which there is a standard decorated with fillet, surmounted by a Garuda facing.</p> <p>Beneath king's l. arm written vertically, <u>Samudra</u>. Outside the standard, <u>Gupta</u> on some coins. Circular legend: <u>Samara-Sata-vitata-vijayo jita-ripurajito divam jayati</u>. "The invincible (king) who had won victories on a hundred battlefields and conquered his enemies, wins heaven".</p>	<p>Goddess (Lakṣmī) seated facing on throne, nimbate, wearing sari, a bodice, an upper garment, a necklace, armlets and circular pearl-bordered ornament round the face. She holds cornucopiae in l. hand and fillet in out-stretched r. hand; her feet rest on lotus. Border of dots all around. On r. <u>Parākramah</u>.</p>	<p>British Museum; The Hugi hoard in 1883; JASB, 1884, p. 152; Allan <u>op.cit.</u>, cxviii Plates I & II</p>

The Archer type coin of Candara Gupta II

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location Findspot and References.
<p>Gold; 127.5 grs. .8"</p>	<p>King nimbate, looking to his right, a bow in the l.hand and an arrow held near its head in the r. Standard surmounted by Garuda visible on the back-ground between the arrow and the king. Below the left arm, <u>Candra</u>, written vertically.</p>	<p>Goddess, nimbate, seated on a lotus, within a circle of dots. A flower with a long stalk in her l.hand and noose in her r. On the left margin of the coin, in a straight line, <u>Śrīvikramaḥ</u>.</p>	<p>Dacca Museum. In Koṭālipāḍā in the Farīdpur district. <u>JASB.(MS);</u> <u>XIX,p.ṁ.57.</u> <u>Allan op.cit.,</u> <u>Plate VI.</u></p>

The Archer type coin of Kumāra Gupta I
(General description)

Metal
Wt.

Obv.

Rev.

Present location
Findspot and
References.

Gold;
Weight and
size not
specified.

Average
about
124grs.
.8".

King standing nimbate to l. having arrow in r. hand and bow in l. He is bare-headed. He wears a coat. The bow is sometimes held at the top with string inside and sometimes at the middle with string outside. There is a Garuda standard behind the king's r. hand. On some coins, kumāra and on others ku, surmounted by a crescent under the l. arm of the king. On some coins, kumāra is outside the string to right, on some neither ku nor kumāra. Circular legends vary with different types. In variety A., the legend is Vi.ji.tā-vaniravanipatiḥ Kumāra Gupto divam jayati. "King Kumāra Gupta, who has conquered the earth wins the heaven". In variety B, the legend is Jayati mahītalāmśri Kumāra Guptaḥ and in variety C it is extended by adding the word Sudhanvī at the end. "The excellent archer," Kumāra Gupta conquers the earth."

Goddess Lakṣmī seated on lotus, usually with a noose in r. hand and lotus in l. Sometimes the r. hand is scattering coins or holding a flower. Legend on the r, Srīmahendray.

British
Museum

Hugli hoard.

JASB., 1884,
p. 152.

Allan, op.cit,
Plate XII.

Altekar, op.cit,
Plate X (1-10)

Horseman type coin of Kumāra Gupta I
(General description)

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present loca- tion; Findspot & References
<p>Gold; Weight and size not specified. Average about 127grs. .8".</p>	<p>King, usually nimbate, wearing coat and trousers, riding horse either to r. or l. usually holding bow in the r. or l. hand, sword on some coins hanging by his side, on some coins he has no weapons. The saddle of the horse often shows artistic decorations. Legends vary with each variety. For instance, in variety A, the legend is <u>Br̥thivītalāmbaraśaśi Kumāragunto jayajitah</u> "Invincible Kumāra Gupta, who is as it were the moon in the sky in the form of the earth's surface, is victorious". In variety B the legend is <u>jayati nyo'ribhira-jitah</u> "Victorious is the king who is never defeated by his enemies."</p>	<p>Class I: Lakṣmī seated on stool to l. holding a flower or noose in r. hand a lotus in l. Legend on right, <u>Ajītamahendrah</u>. Class II: Goddess seated as above, feeding with her r. hand a peacock and holding in her l. a lotus with long stalk. Legend as above.</p>	<p>British Museum The Hugli hoard. <u>JASB.</u>, 1884, <u>p. 152.</u> <u>Altekar, op. cit.</u> <u>Plate XI.</u></p>

Lion-Trampler coin of Kumāra Gupta I.

Metal Wt. Size	Obv.	Rev.	Present location Findspot and References.
<p>Gold:</p> <p>Weight and size not specified.</p> <p>Average about 127grs.</p> <p>.75".</p>	<p>King standing r., wearing waistcloth with sash floating behind and jewellery, shooting lion, which falls backward on r., with bow in l. hand, r. drawn behind head. Legends vary on different varieties.</p>	<p>Goddess, nimbate, seated facing on lion couchant r., holding fillet in outstretched r. hand and lotus in l. hand. Border of dots. Symbol on l. Legend, <u>Śrīmahendrasimha</u></p>	<p>British Museum</p> <p>Hugli hoard</p> <p>JASB., 1884, p. 152.</p> <p>Allan, <u>op. cit.</u>, Plate XIV.</p>

The Archer type coin of Skanda Gupta

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location, Findspots & References.
<p>Base gold: 126grs. .75".</p>	<p>King, nimbate, standing in the <u>divibhanga</u> pose to l., with r. hand extended in the posture of holding an arrow, and l. hand holding a bow with string inwards; behind right arm a <u>Garuḍadhvaaja</u>; below l. arm <u>Skanda</u> written vertically. No symbol, and no traces of marginal legend.</p>	<p>The reverse has goddess <u>Lakṣmī-Srī</u>, nimbate (?) seated cross-legged on lotus to front, holding <u>pāśa</u> (noose) in her r. hand and <u>padma</u> (lotus) in her l.; above r. arm a group of five dots instead of symbols; traces of marginal legend (<u>k</u>)<u>ra</u> (<u>m</u>)....on r.</p>	<p>Present location is not given; Bogra district of Bengal; JNSI, 1945, (Pt. I and II) pp. 13ff. Plate II, 6.</p>

The Archer type coin of Vainya Gupta.

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location, Findspot and References
Gold: 144.7grs. .8".	King, wearing <u>dhoti</u> , necklace, armlets and wristlets, standing to l.; hair falls on the neck in tresses; he is holding bow in the l. hand and arrow in the r.; <u>Garuda</u> standard in front. Beneath l. arm { <u>Vainya</u> }.	Goddess seated on lotus, facing, profuse hair on the head, holding lotus with long stalk in l. hand and noose in r. Legend <u>Dvadaśadityah</u> .	British Museum. Findspot unknown. <u>IHQ.</u> , 1930, p. 45; <u>N.Ch.</u> 1891, p. 57; <u>CCGDBM.</u> , 1111-11v; <u>IHQ.</u> , 1934, p. 195. <u>Altekar, op.cit.</u> , Plate XV (13)

Archer type coin of Narasimha Gupta

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location Findspot and References.
<p>Gold:</p> <p>144.grs.</p> <p>Size varies from .8" to .95".</p>	<p>King, nimbate, standing to l. and holding bow in l. hand and arrow in r. Wearing <u>dhōti</u>, sash and jewellery; Garuda standard on l. Legend under the l. arm of the king, <u>Nara</u>. Between feet, <u>gre</u>. Legend incomplete on known coins; it ends <u>jayati Narasimha-</u> <u>suptah</u>.</p>	<p>Lakṣmī nimbate, seated on lotus facing to front, noose in r. hand and lotus in l.; border of dots; symbol on the l. Legend, <u>Bālāditya</u>.</p>	<p>British Museum Kalignāṭ hoard. Allan, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. civ. Altekar, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 269ff. Altekar, Plate XV. 1.</p>
	<p>1. Allan, <u>op.cit.</u> p. 137.</p>		

The Archer coin of Kumāra Gupta III

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location; Findspot and references.
Gold: 143grs. .8"	King, bimbate, head bare, hair curly, standing l. holding bow in l. hand and arrow in r.; Garuda standard behind the r. arm. Below the l. arm <u>ku</u> with crescent above.	Goddess Lakṣmī seated on lotus facing, with lotus in l. hand and noose in r. hand. Symbol on l. Legend, <u>kramāditya</u> .	British Museum Kaliṅghāt hoard. Allan, <u>op. cit.</u> , p. civ; Altekar, <u>op. cit.</u> , p. 271. Allan, Plate XXII, 14. Altekar, Plate XV. 3.

The Archer type coin of Viṣṇu Gupta

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location, Findspot and References.
Gold: 149grs. .8"	King standing nimbate to l.; holding bow and arrow. Garuḍa standard on l. Under the l. arm, beneath a crescent, <u>Viṣṇu</u> . No trace of marginal legend.	Goddess, nimbate, seated on lotus, facing, holding noose in r. hand and a lotus in the l. Symbol on l. Legend <u>Śrī-</u> <u>Candraḍitya</u> .	British Museum. Kālighaṭ hoard. Altekar, <u>op.cit.</u> , p.280. Allan, <u>CCGDBM</u> , Plate XXIII.9.

The Rājallīa type of Samācaradeva.

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location, Findspot and References.
Alloyed gold: 149grs. .8".	King, nimbate, seated on couch in a Rājallīa pose, with head to l. hand raised and r. resting at side. Female attendant (or queen) on either side. Between the king's head and attendant r. written perpendicularly, <u>Samā</u> ; under the couch, <u>cā</u> . <u>Ra</u> is probably beneath the feet of the female on r.	Goddess Sarasvatī, nimbate, standing on a lotus bed in <u>tribhanga</u> pose. Her l. hand rests on a lotus with bent stalk; with her r. hand she draws up another lotus with long stalk in front of her face, as if to smell it. A lotus bud with a stalk under the r. hand; below it is a goose (<u>hamsa</u>) with neck stretched upwards. Legend on the l. <u>Narendravinita</u> .	Indian Museum, Calcutta. Jessore district. <u>JASB. NS., XIX, 1923.</u> <u>pp. M. 55ff.</u> <u>Altekar, op. cit.,</u> <u>pp. 327-328;</u> <u>Plate. XIXA 7.</u>

The Archer type coin of Samācārādeva

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location, Findspot and References.
<p>Alloyed gold.</p> <p>148.2 grs.</p> <p>.9"</p>	<p>King, nimbate, standing l. in <u>tribhanga</u> pose, holding bow in l. hand and offering oblations by the r. Necklace round the neck; bull standard behind r. hand. Legend below the l. arm <u>Samā</u>; between the feet <u>cā</u> and above the bull of the standard, probably the letter <u>ra</u>.</p>	<p>Lakṣmī, nimbate, seated facing on lotus, with lotus in l. hand and fillet in the r. which is outstretched.</p> <p>Legend on the r. <u>Narendra-vinita</u>.</p>	<p>Indian Museum, Calcutta;</p> <p>Provenance unknown.</p> <p><u>JASB(NS) ., XIX, 1923. pp. N. 54ff.</u> <u>Altekar, op. cit., Plate. XIXA(6).</u></p>

Half-Satamāna type of Śaśāṅka

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location, Findspot References.
Gold: 85grs. .75"	As above, but no trace of the legend <u>Śrīśa</u> . Below the bull, <u>Yaja</u> and not <u>Jaya</u> .	Lakṣmī holds lotus in r. hand and l. hand rests on thigh; no ablutition by elephants. Legend: <u>Śrīśaśāṅka</u> .	British Museum. Findspot unknown. Altekar, <u>CGE</u> ., p. 330. Plate XIXA. 10.

The Archer type Coin of Jayanāga.

Metal Wt. Size.	Obv.	Rev.	Present location, Findspot and References.
Gold: 131.8grs. .8"	King, nimbate, standing to l., holding bow in l. hand and arrow in r. Cakra-standard behind the king's r. hand. Legend <u>Jaya</u> under the king's arm. No circular legend.	Goddess Lakṣmī, nimbate, seated facing on lotus, holding lotus in l. hand and fillet in r. hand out- stretched; faint traces of an elephant on l. sprinkling the goddess. Legend on r. <u>Sra(I)Prakaṇḍayaśa.</u>	British Museum, Findspot unknown. Altekar, <u>op.cit.</u> , p. 331-332.

APPENDIX C

Was Bengal the homeland of the Imperial Guptas?

Scholars¹ have generally assumed that the original home of the Imperial Guptas was in Magadha. But D.C. Ganguli has suggested that the "early home of the Imperial Guptas is to be located in Murshidabad, Bengal and not in Magadha."² R.C. Majumdar³ has also supported his view. The view of D.C. Ganguli is solely based on the Chinese tradition recorded by I-tsing. He refers to the travels of Hwui-Lun, a Korean traveller who came to India by^{the} northern route, following Hiuen Chiu, who had returned to Kashmir in 664 A.D., and later on came back and met I-tsing in Nālandā.⁴ It is important to consider the route of Hwui-Lun's journey to India as recorded by I-tsing. This is the relevant part of the account in Beal's first translation: "Passing through the eastern frontiers and thence proceeding northward he (Hwui-Lun) came to Tu-ho-lo (Tukhāra) Temple. This temple

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1. P.H.A.I., (4th edn.) p. 443; E.H.I., (4th edn.) p. 295; C.C.G.D.B.M., p. xiv; A.I.G., pp. 4-6.
 2. I.H.Q., XIV, p. 532.
 3. H.B., I. Appendix 1. pp. 69-70.
 4. The Life, p. xxviii.

was originally built by the Tukhāra people for their own priests. The establishment is called Gandhārasaṇḍa. To the West is the Kapiśā Temple. The priests of this establishment study the Little Vehicle. Priests from the north also dwell here. The Temple is called Guṇacarita. Two stages to the east of the Mahābodhi is a temple called Kiu-lu-kea. It was built long ago by a king of Kiu-lu-kia country, a southern kingdom. Recently a king called Sun-Army (Adityasena) built by the side of the old temple another which is now newly finished. Priests from the south occupy this temple. About forty stages east of this, following the course of the Ganges, is the Deer Temple, and not far from this is a ruined establishment with only its foundation remaining called the China Temple. Tradition says that formerly a Mahārāja called Śrī Gupta built this temple for the use of the Chinese priests."¹

This Śrī Gupta has been identified with the ancestor of Candragupta I, and Mahābodhi Temple with the famous Bodhi Gaya Temple. Allan² located the China Temple built by Śrī Gupta in Magadha. But Ganguli³ believed that according to

1. Life, p. xxxvi.

2. C.C.G.D.B.M., p. xv.

3. I.H.Q., xiv, pp. 532.

I-tsing the Mṛgaśikhāvana Temple (Deer Temple) existed 40 stages east of Nālandā, and placed it in the Murshidabad district in Bengal. R.C. Majumdar¹ has also reinforced this suggestion by pointing out that in an illustrated Cambridge M.S. (Add. 1643) dated in 1015 A.D. there is a picture of a stūpa with the label "Mrigasthāpana Stūpa of Varendra", which is probably the Mṛgaśikhāvana of I-tsing's Records. He also says that "the Temple of China was near the Mṛgasthāpana Stūpa in Varendra and must have been situated either in Varendra or not far from its boundary, on the banks of the Bhāgīrathī and the Padmā."²

But B.P. Sinha³ has challenged the theory of D.C. Ganguli and he put forward some valid arguments against his views. His arguments are based on the following grounds:-

(a) Beal's translation of I-tsing's accounts does not show clearly that the Deer Temple was forty stages east of Nālandā. Beal's translation creates some confusion as to whether the Nālandā Temple was forty stages east of the Adityasena's Temple or the Mṛgaśikhāvana Temple was forty stages east of the Adityasena's Temple.

1. H.B.R., I. p. 69.

2. H.B.R., I. p. 69.

3. J.B.R.S., XXXVII, 1951, pp. 138 ff.

(b) Beal¹_{himself} notes that "it is doubtful whether the Mahābodhi named here does not refer to the Tu-ho-lo Temple mentioned above."

(c) Beal's second translation is more definite where he renders the disputed passage thus, "To the north-east of the great Bodhi (the temple just mentioned), about a couple of stages is another temple called Cālukya."² The two translations were compared by Professor W. Simon at the request of B.P. Sinha, and the first was preferred.³

According to B.P. Sinha in the context of Hwui-Lun's travels the great Bodhi first mentioned is different from the Mahābodhi Temple of Gaya,⁴ which the traveller mentions later. He says that^{the} first Mahābodhi should be identified with the Tu-ho-lo or Ta-hsio (Great Learning) Temple mentioned by the Korean traveller.⁵ We would agree that the first mentioned Mahābodhi is different from the second Mahābodhi Temple which is near the Diamond Throne (i.e. at Gaya),⁶

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1. The Life, p. xxxvi, note 1.
 2. I.A., X. p. 110.
 3. J.B.R.S., Vol. 37. 1951, p. 140.
 4. The Life, p. xxxvii.
 5. Ibid., p. xxxvi; I.A., p. 110.
 6. The Life, p. xxxvii.

and the first Mahābodhi seems to us not very far from the Tikhāra Temple and the Kapiśā Temple. It is also important to note here that the pilgrim says that "two stages to the east of the Mahābodhi is a temple called Kiu-lu-kia, a southern kingdom." In his first translation Beal identified Kiu-lu-kia with Kuruksetra,¹ though he later preferred the rendering Cālukya.² It is not at all clear to us that this is the correct rendering. If this temple was built "long ago" in I-Tsing's time it would be surprising if it had been built by the Cālukyas, since we have no evidence of the existence of this dynasty before the middle of the sixth century.³ It would have been hardly likely that in the early seventh century Harṣa would have allowed his enemy Pulaṅkeśin II (who incidentally seems to have had no great interest in Buddhism) or one of his officers, to build a temple in the heart of his kingdom. Though of course Kuruksetra is not in the south, it might have seemed so to Hwui-lun, who was coming from much further north, and the first syllable of the Chinese name corresponds much more

1. The Life, p. xxxvi.

2. I.A., p. 110.

3. C.A., pp. 104 ff.

closely to Ku than to Cā. If this interpretation is correct the above mentioned Great Bodhi temple is different from the famous temple at Gaya and it should be located near Delhi. If we locate the Great Bodhi temple in Delhi it becomes easier to place the Ādityasena's temple, the Deer temple and the China temple.

We find that the pilgrim mentions Ādityasena's temple immediately after the mention of the Kurukṣetra or Cālukya temple. It is also clear that Ādityasena's temple is in Uttar Pradesh. Then the Korean traveller says that about forty stages east of this (the Ādityasena temple) following the course of the Ganges, is the Deer temple and not far from this (the Deer temple) is the China temple.¹ After the China temple he mentions the Mahābodhi temple; then he mentions the Nālanda temple which is seven stages (one stage = $5 \frac{5}{7}$ miles; 7 stages = 40 miles) north-east of the Mahābodhi.²

It appears from the above passage that the pilgrim came to the Deer temple from the Ādityasena temple which was about

1. The Life, p. xxxvi.

2. Ibid., xxxvii.

forty stages (228 $\frac{4}{7}$ miles) west of the Deer temple. If we locate ^{The} Ādityasena temple in Uttar Pradesh the Mrgasīkhāvana temple should also be in Uttar Pradesh and not in Bengal. Thus it might well be identified with the famous Mrgavana, the site of the Buddha's first sermon, at Sarnath near Banaras. After mentioning this the Korean traveller refers to the China temple and after this to the Mahābodhi temple and Nālandā temple. Hence, it appears that the Deer temple was west of the Mahābodhi temple and the Nālandā temple. Therefore, we cannot place it in Murshidabad, in Bengal.

Besides this, we do not have any solid evidence to prove that the original home of the Guptas was in Bengal. The Mathura origin of Samudra Gupta is suggested in the Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa.¹ According to Jayaswal² the Guptas may have belonged to a section of the Jat community. The imperial Guptas belonged to the Dhāraṇagotra, as is known from an inscription of Prabhāvatīguptā.³ Dasaratha Sharma⁴ has shown that the Dhāraṇa gotra is still prevalent among

1. I.H.I., pp. 52-53, Verses 758-60.

2. History of India, pp. 115-119.

3. E.I., XV, p. 41.

4. Cf. J.B.R.S., XXXVII, 1951, p. 142.

the Jats. All these facts indicate that the Guptas were not originally inhabitants of Magadha but were living in a region far further west. Moreover, it is also important to note that there is no positive evidence to include any part of Bihar in the kingdom of ^{The} Guptas before the reign of Candragupta I. We do not even know whether any part of Bengal was included in the kingdom of Candragupta I, for the Purāṇic testimony¹ includes Prayāga, Sāketa and Magadha, but not any region in Bengal, among the early dominions of the Guptas. Therefore, we cannot accept D.C. Ganguli's view that the early home of the Imperial Guptas is to be located in Murshidabād, in Bengal.

1. Pargiter, P.T.D.K.A., p. 53, 73.

APPENDIX D.

LIST OF INSCRIPTIONS

The Maurya Period. 3rd Century B.C.

- (1) Brāhmī inscription (in Prākṛit) from Mahāsthān, in the district of Bogra, North Bengal. Discovered in 1931. Preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Records provision for the distribution of paddy and money during certain emergencies, from Puṇḍranagara. (E.I., XXI, p.85; B.M., Barua, I.H.Q., 1934, p. 57 ff.)

The Imperial Gupta Period.

C. A.D. 350 - A.D. 543-44.

- (2) The Susuniā Rock inscription of Candravarman (c. A.D. 350). Engraved on the Susuniā Hill in the Bankura district. Records grant of Doṣagrāma (8) in honour of the God Cakrasvāmin. (E.I., XII, p. 317 ff; XIII, p. 133; A.S.I., A.R., 1927-28, p. 188 f.)
- (3) Dhanaidaha Copper plate inscription of the reign of Kumāra Gupta I (name lost), dated in the (Gupta) year 113 (= A.D. 433).

Discovered from Dhanaidaha, a village in the Natore Subdivision of the Rajshahi, North Bengal. Preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.

Records purchase of some land by an Āyuktaka and gift to a Brāhmaṇa named Varāhasvāmin of the Sāmavedin School. (J.A.S.B., V, p. 459 ff; E.I., XVII, p. 347 f.).

- (4) Dāmodarpur copper-plate inscription of the reign of Kumāra Gupta I dated in the (Gupta) year 124 (= A.D. 444).

Recovered from Dāmodarpur, a village near Railway and Police Station Phulbari in the district of Dinajpur, North Bengal. Preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.

Records purchase of land by Karppaṭika, a Brāhmaṇa, for the performance of his Agnihotra rites. (E.I., XV, p. 130 f.)

- (5) Dāmodarpur copper-plate inscription of the reign of Kumāra Gupta I, dated in the Gupta year 128 (= A.D. 448).

Preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.

Records purchase of land. Buyer's name cannot be read. His object was to maintain the five daily sacrifices. (E.I., XV, p. 133 f; Ibid., XVII, p. 193.).

- (6) Baigrām copper-plate inscription of the (Gupta) year 128 (= A.D. 448).

Discovered from Baigrām, a village (Post Office Hilli) in North Bengal, found in 1930. Reported to be in the custody of the Gauḍa Research Society, Howrah.

Records purchase of lands by the two brothers Bhoyila and Bhāskara to meet the cost of occasional repairs to the temple of Govindasvāmin, founded by their father Sivanandin, and also for the daily worship of the deity with perfume, incense, lamps and flowers. (E.I., XXI, p. 81 f.).

- (7) Pāhārpur copper-plate inscription of the (Gupta) year 159 (= A.D. 479).

Discovered in 1927 at Pāhārpur, a village three miles to the west of the Jamalganj Railway Station, in the course of the excavation of the local temple.

Records purchase of lands by the Brāhman Nāthasārman and his wife Rāmī for the conduct of the worship, with perfume, incense, flowers and lamps, of the Arhats in the monastery (Vihāra), established by the disciples and the disciples' disciples of the Jaina Guhanandin. (E.I., XX, p. 61 ff.).

- (8) Dāmodarpur copper-plate inscription of the reign of Budha Gupta, dated in the (Gupta) year 163 (= A.D. 483).

Preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.

Records purchase of land near Vāyigrāma by the Grāmika Nābhaka whose object was to provide some Brāhman^{as} with a dwelling place. (E.I., XV, p. 135 f.).

- (9) Dāmodarpur copper-plate inscription of the reign of Budha Gupta. Date lost.

Preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.

Records purchase of lands by the Śreṣṭhin Rbhupāla whose object was to build two temples of Kokāmukha-Svāmī and Śvetavarāhasvāmī with two chambers. (E.I., XV., p. 138 f.)

- (10) Gunaighar copper-plate of the reign of Vainya Gupta dated in the (Gupta) year 188 (= A.D. 507).

From Gunaighar, a village in the district of Tippera, about 18 miles north-west of Comilla town.

Discovered about 1925, with a seal, (I.H.Q., VI, p. 53 ff; Ibid., p. 561), bearing the figure of a bull and a legend: Mahārāja Śrī Vai (nya-Guptah). Preserved in the Dacca Museum.

Records the gift of some fallow and homestead land for meeting all kinds of expenses of such objects connected with worship as perfumes, flowers, lamps, incense etc., for the Buddha in the monastery of Avalokiteśvara, which was erected by King's pādadāsa (dependent officer) Mahārāja Rudradatta in honour of the great teacher Sāntideva, the founder of the Vaivarttika sect of the Mahāyana.

- (11) Dāmodarpur copper-plate of the reign of Viṣṇu Gupta (?) dated in the (Gupta) year 224 (= A.D. 543).

Preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.

Records purchase of land by the Kulaputra (a nobleman) Amṛtadeva of Ayodhyā to provide the cost of repairs to a temple of Śvetavarāhasvāmī, as well as the supply of bali, caru, satra, the cow's milk, incense and flowers, lamps, etc., required for the worship of the deity.

(E.I., XV, p. 142 f; Ibid., XVII, p. 193 f.).

The Post-Gupta Period.

C. A.D. 550 - C. A.D. 700.

- (12) Faridpur copper-plate of the reign of Dharmāditya, dated in the year 3.

Discovered in 1892. Preserved in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society, Calcutta. With a circular seal inscribed with ^athe legend which reads Vāraka-maṇḍala-Viṣayādhikaranasya.

Records gift of some land situated in Druvitati to a Brahman Candra^aSvāmin of the Bhāradvāja gotra by Sāadhanika Vātabhoga. (I.A., XXXIX, 1910, p. 195 f; J.R.A.S., 1912, p. 710 ff.).

- (13) Undated Faridpur copper-plate of the reign of Dharmāditya.

(Seal findspot and present location, as 12, above.)

Records gift of some land to a Brāhmaṇa named Somasvāmin of the Lauhittya gotra by Vāsudeva Svāmin. (I.A., XXXIX, p. 200 f.).

- (14) Mallasārul copper-plate of the reign of Mahārāja Gopacandra dated in the year 3.

Discovered from Malla Sārul, a village near the northern bank of the Damodar river in the district of Burdwan, in 1929. Preserved in the Vangīya Sāhitya Parishat, Calcutta. With a circular seal containing the inscription: (Mahā)rāja-Vijaya Senasya and the figure of a male with two arms (identified with Lokanātha by N.G. Majumdar, See E.I., XXIII, p. 157, f.n. 1.) Set within a Cakra. Invocation to Lokanātha, to Dharma, and to the Saints (Santaḥ, i.e. the Buddhist Saṅgha).

Records purchase of land by Mahārāja Vijayasena and gift to Vatsa Svāmin of the R̥gvedic School, enabling him to conduct the five daily sacrifices. (E.I., XXIII, p. 159 ff.).

- (15) Faridpur copper-plate of the reign of Gopacandra, dated in the year 18.

Found in Faridpur. Preserved in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. With a circular

seal containing the legend: Vāraka-maṇḍala-viṣaya = adhikaranasya.

Records purchase of land by Vatsapālasvāmin and gift to Bhaṭṭa Gomidattasvāmin for the increase of the merits of the former's parents and himself. (I.A., XXXIX, 1910, p. 204).

- (16) Ghugrahāṭi copper-plate of the reign of Samācāradeva, dated in the year 14. Preserved in the Dacca Museum.

Records transfer of some land to the Brāhmaṇa Supratīkasvāmin. (E.I., XVIII. p. 74 f.).

- (17) Rohtāsgaḍh stone seal-matrix of the Mahāsāmanta Śaśāṅkadeva.

Discovered by Mr. Beglar. "Cut in the rock at hill-fort of Rohtāsgaḍh ... twenty-four miles south by west of Sahasārām in Bihar. In the upper part, there is a somewhat damaged representation of a bull." (C.I.I., III. p. 283 f.).

- (18) Ganjām Plates of the time of Śaśāṅkarāja, dated in the year 300 (= A.D. 619) of the Gupta Era.

Find-place unknown. Preserved in the Madras Museum. With a seal bearing the figure of a couchant bull in relief, and the legend: Srī-Sainyabhīta(y)a.

Records grant of the village Cavalakhaya in the

Kṛṣṇagiri Viṣaya to Carampasvāmin on the occasion of a solar eclipse. (E.I., VI. p. 143 ff.)

(19-20) Two Midnapur copper-plates of the time of Śaśāṅka.

Discovered from Midnapur in 1937. Actual find-place is not known.

Preserved in the Sāhitya Parishad, Midnapur.

Plate A., dated in the (Gupta) year 309 (= A.D. 628), records the donation of the village Mahā-Kumbhārapadraka to Bhaṭṭeśvara. Plate B records the donation of some lands to Dāmyasvāmin. (JR.A.S.B., (Series III) pp. 1 ff. 1948).

(21) Vappaghoṣavāta (or Mallia) copper-plate of the reign of Jayanāga.

Reported to have been found on an indigo estate at Mallia. Presented by Mr. J. Greig of Calcutta to the Museum of Perth. With a seal bearing "traces of an upright female figure apparently Lakṣmī, with either one or two elephants performing the Kumbhābhisheka over her and an illegible inscription."

Records gift of the village Vappaghoṣavāta to a Sāmavedin Brāhmin named Brahmavīrasvāmī. (E.I., XVIII. p. 60 ff.).

(22-23). Two Āshrafpur copper-plate grants of Devakhaḍga (Plates A and B), dated in the year 13.

Both recovered, together with a small Caitya of bronze, at Āshrafpur in the Dacca district, about 30 miles north-east of Dacca town, East Bengal, in 1884 or 1885. Preserved in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. Each plate with a seal containing in relief the figure of a couchant bull, and the legend Srīmad-Devakhaḍga, distinct on Plate B, but not so on the other plate.

Plate A. Very much damaged by corrosion. Records grant of some land to Ācārya Saṅghamitra, Head of several Buddhist monastic establishments. Invocation to Buddha. Dated in the year 13.

Plate B. Invocation to Buddha. Records grant of some land to the monastery of Saṅghamitra, the Ācārya (preceptor) of Sālīvardaka.

Envoy - Yajñavarman. Dated in the 13. (Mem. A.S.B., Vol. I, pp. 85-91).

(24) Deulbāḍī Saṅyānī image-inscription of Mahādevī Prabhāvatī, the Queen of Devakhaḍga.

Found at the village of Deulbāḍī in the Tippera

district, East Bengal.

Inscribed on an eight-handed image of the goddess Śarvvāṇī, seated on a couchant lion. Reported to be missing.

Records the covering with gold of an image of Śarvvāṇī (hemaliptām) by Prabhāvatī, the Queen (mahiṣī) of Devakhaḍga, son of Jātakhaḍga, son of Khaḍgodiyama. (E.I., Vol. XVII, p. 357 ff.).

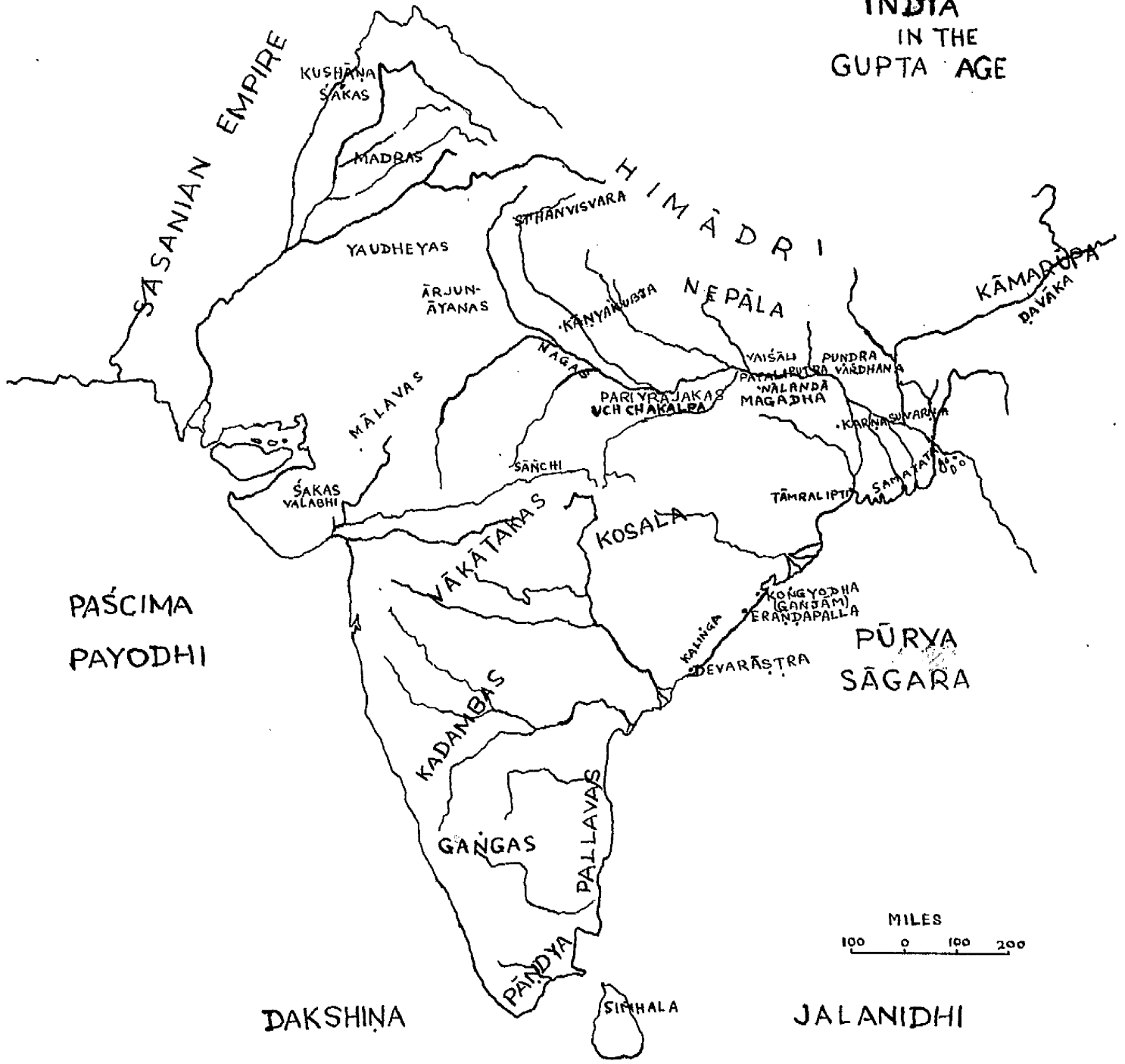
(25) Tipperah copper-plate grant of Lokanātha The Year 44.

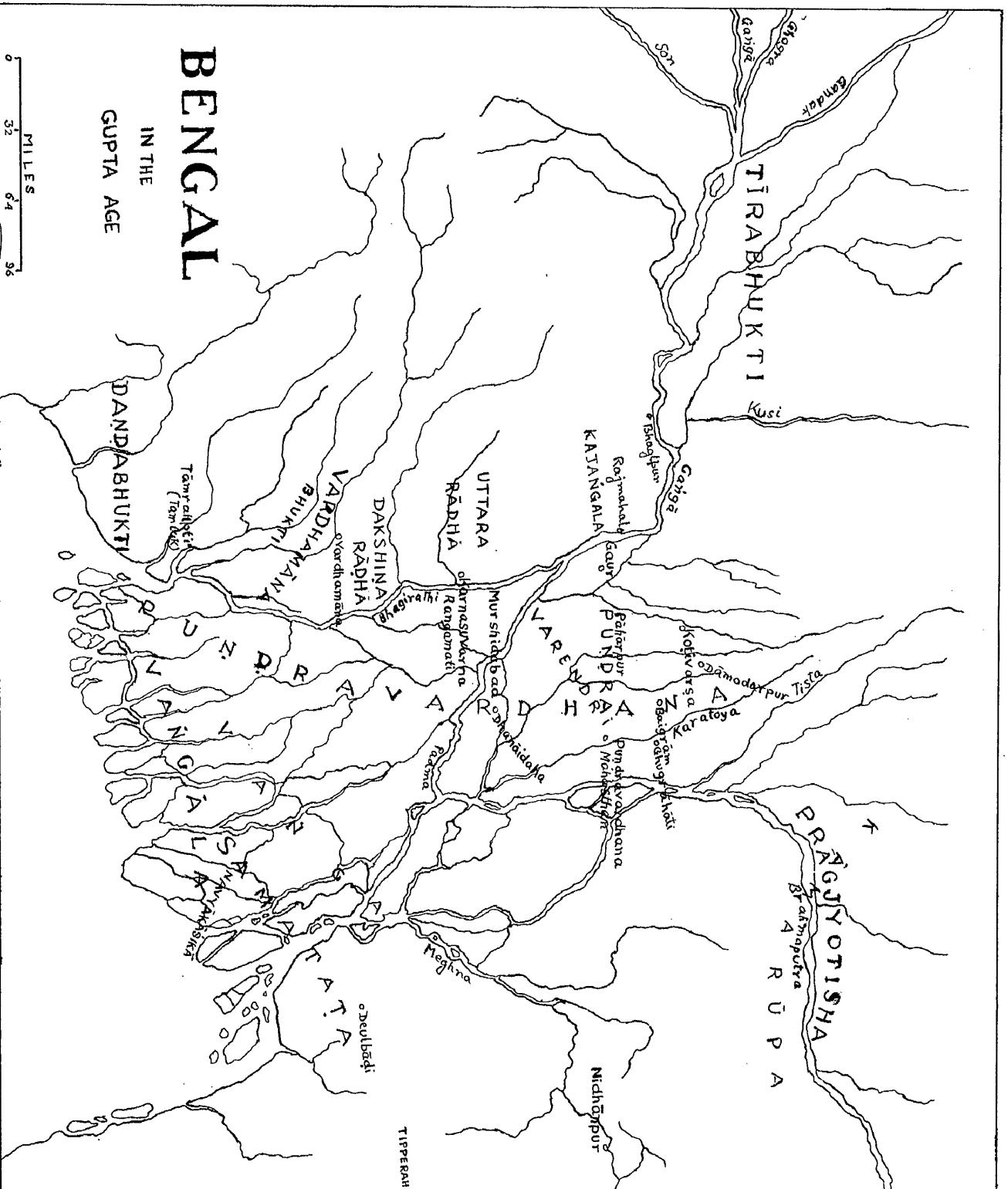
Discovered from the district of Tipperah, East Bengal. Preserved in the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

The seal bears in relief a figure of the goddess Lakṣmī, standing on a lotus and with two elephants on the two sides of it, sprinkling her with water from two jars lifted by their trunks. Two attendant figures seated cross-legged at the two sides of the goddess. With a circular seal inscribed with the legend, Kumārā-mātya-ādhikaraṇasya.

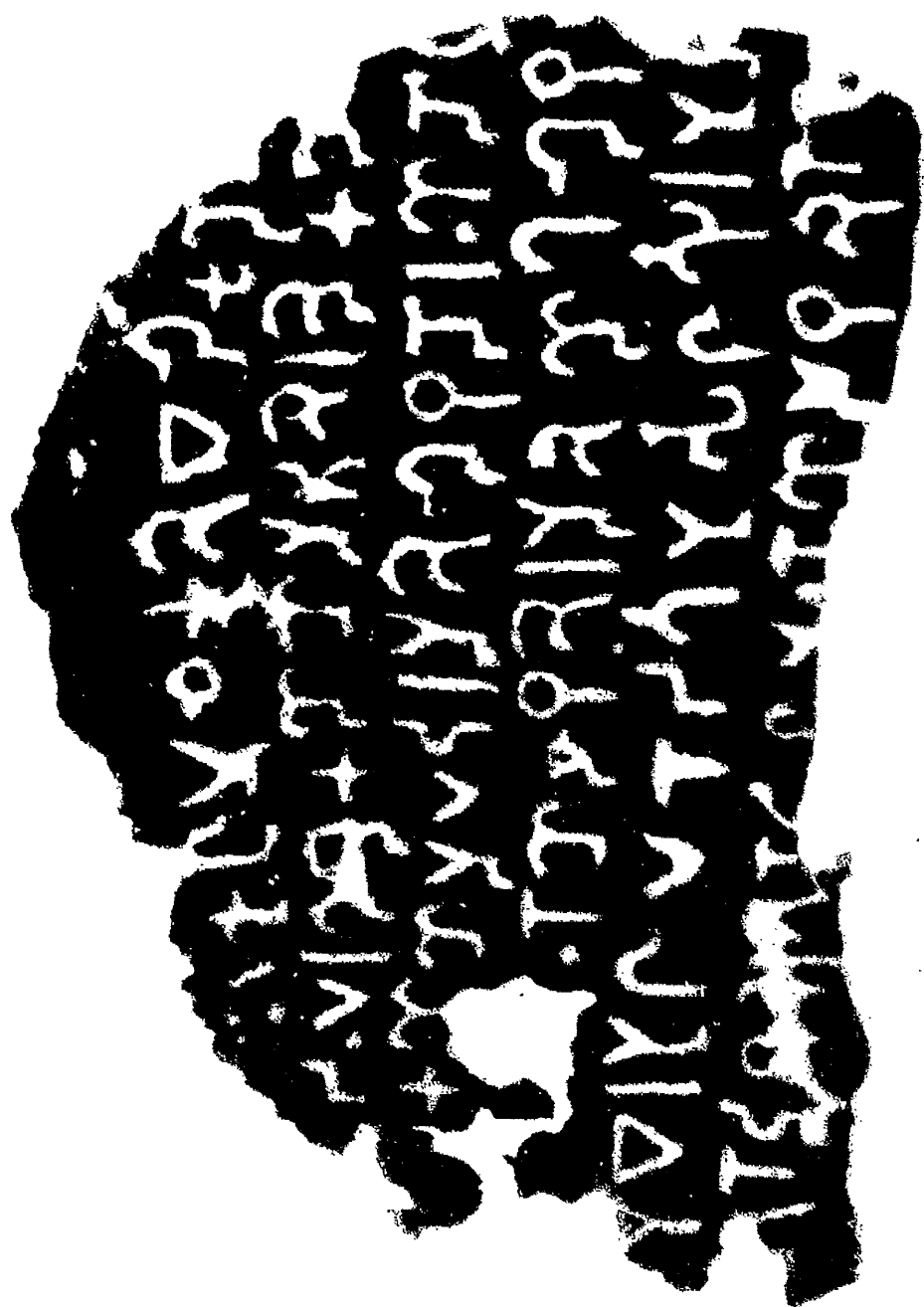
Records a grant of land to a Brāhmaṇa in the forest region in the viṣaya of Suvvuṅga. In this land the King Lokanātha wished to erect a temple, wherein he desired to set up an image of Ananta Nārāyaṇa. (E.I., XV. p. 301 f).

INDIA
IN THE
GUPTA AGE





MAHĀSTHĀN INSCRIPTION.
From an estampage.



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4

6

PLATE No. 1.

PALAEOGRAPHY OF THE PATIAKELLA SORO AND MIDNAPUR PLATES.

	<u>ya</u>	<u>ka</u>	<u>na</u>
PATIAKELLA _____ 283	𑂣	𑂦	𑂮
SORO A _____ 260	𑂦	𑂦	𑂮
SORO B & C ---	𑂣	𑂦	𑂮
SORO D ---	𑂣	”	𑂮
MIDNAPUR A & B ---	𑂦𑂣	𑂦	𑂮𑂮

Officials of Puṇḍravarchana Bhukti

Adhikarṇa

Date	Emperor	Uparika	Viśaya or locality.	Viśayapati	Nagaraśreṣṭhīn	Sarthaavāha	Prathamakulika	Prathamakṛtyastha	Pustapālas.
A.D. 443- 444	Kumāra - Gupta I	Cirātadatta	Koṭivarṣa	Vetravarman	Dhṛtipāla	Bandumitra	Dhṛtimitra	Sambhupāla	Ṛsidatta, Jayadatta Vibhudatta
A.D. 448- 449	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
A.D. 482	Buddha Gupta	Brahmadatta	Canda- grāma	-	-	-	-	-	Paṭraḍṛsa
No date	Buddha Gupta	Jayadatta	Koṭivarṣa	Saṇḍaka	Ṛbhupāla	Vasumitra	Varadatta	Viprepāla	Viśvudatta, Viśayanandin Sthānandin
A.D. 543- 44	Viṣṇu Gupta	Devabhāṭṭā- raka	"	Svayambhū- dava	Ārya Ṛbhupāla	Sthānudatta	Matidatta	Skandapāla	Narendri, Gopadatta, Bhaṭṭanandi

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" : Four forged grants from Faridpur,
J.A.S.B., N.S., X p. 425 ff.

" : A Seal of King Bhāskaravarman of
Prāgjyotiṣa found at Nālandā J.B.O.R.S.
V. Pt. II. p. 302 ff.

- Banerji, R.D. : Two Inscriptions of Kumāra Gupta I.
J.A.S.B. (N.S.), V. p. 457 ff.
- Basak, R.G. : Baigrām Copper-plate inscription of
the Gupta era 128 G.E. E.I., XX, p. 78 ff.
- " : Dhanaidaha Copper-plate inscription of
the time of Kumāra Gupta I of the Gupta
Era 113, E.I., XVI. p. 345 ff.
- " : Tipperah Copper plate Grant of Lokanātha
the 44th year. E.I., XV. p. 301 ff.
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J.A.H.R.S., X Pts. I-IV, pp. 86-88.
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1931-1932. p. 85 ff.
- " : Notes on the Mandasor Inscription of
Naravarman. I.A., XLII. p. 199 ff.
- Bhattacharya, D.C.: A newly discovered copper-plate from
Tippera (The Gunaighar Grant of Vainya
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ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.:	Aitareya Āraṇyaka - A.B. Keith.
A.B.:	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa - A.B. Keith.
A.B.O.R.I.:	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.
A.I.:	Ancient India.
A.I.G.:	Age of the Imperial Guptas, R.D. Banerji.
A.I.H.T.:	Ancient Indian Historical Tradition. F.E. Pargiter.
A.M.S.J.:	Ashutosh Mookherjee Silver Jubilee Commemorative Volumes.
Arth :	Arthaśāstra of Kautilya. R.P. Kangle.
A.S.I.A.R.:	Archaeological Survey of India. Annual Report.
A.V.:	Atharva Veda.
B.D.S.:	Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra. Führer.
B.I.:	Bāṅgālār Itihāsa. R.D. Banerji.
B.I.R.:	Bāṅgālār Itihāsa. N.R. Ray.
B.K.:	Book.
B.M. Cat:	Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India (in the British Museum). J. Allan.
Bom Gaz :	Bombay Gazeteer.
B.S.O.A.S. :	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. University of London.

- C.A. : The Classical Age. R.C. Majumdar.
 C.A.G.I. : Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India. S.N. Majumdar.
 C.A.I. : Coins of Ancient India, Cunningham.
- C.A.S.R. : Cunningham's Archaeological Survey of India Reports. Calcutta.
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 B.M.C.G.D. } dynasty in the British Museum. J. Allan.
- C.C.I.M. } Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum.
 C.I.M. } V.A. Smith.
- C.G.E. : The Coinage of the Gupta Empire.
 A.S. Altekar.
- Chap : Chapter.
- Chavannes, Mem : Memoire Compose
 Religieux Eminents
 I - Ising.
- C.H.I. : Cambridge History of India. Vol. I.
 E.J. Rapson & others.
- C.I.I. : Corpus Inscriptionum Indi~~ca~~ Carum.
 J.F. Fleet.
- C.P. : Copper-plate.
- D.H.N.I. : Dynastic History of Northern India.
 H.C. Ray.
- DIV : Divyā~~ya~~ Vadāna, E.B. Cowell & R.A. Neil.
 Cambridge, 1886.
- D.K.M. : Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha.
 B.P. Sinha.

Ed) edn)	Edited by ; edition.
E.H.B. :	Early History of Bengal. F.J. Manahan.
E.H.B.P. :	Early History of Bengal. P.L. Paul.
E.H.B.R. :	Early History of Bengal. R.C. Majumdar.
E.H.I. :	Early History of India. V.A. Smith.
E.I.) E.P. Ind.)	Epigraphia Indica.
G.E. :	Gupta Era.
G.R. :	Gauḍa - rāja - mālā (in Bengali) R.P. Chanda.
G.V. :	Gauḍa - Vaho of Vākpatirāja. Ed. S.P. Pandit.
H.A.B.I. :	Historical Aspects of Bengal Inscriptions. B.C. Sen.
H.C. :	Harṣa - Carita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa. E.B. Cowell & F.W. Thomas.
H.M.H.I. :	History of Mediaeval Hindu India. C.V. Vaidya.
H.N.E.I. :	History of North-Eastern India. R.G. Basak.
I.A.) Ind. Ant.)	Indian Antiquary.
I.C. :	Indian Culture.
I.H.I. :	An Imperial History of India. K.P. Jayaswal.
I.H.Q. :	Indian Historical Quarterly.
Intro. :	Introduction.

J.A. :	Journal Asiatique, Paris.
Jāt :	Jātaka.
J.A.H.R.S. :	Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society.
J.A.O.S. :	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
J.A.R.S. :	Journal of the Assam Research Society.
J.A.S.B.) J.R.A.S.B.)	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J.A.S.B.L. :	Journal of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal, (Third Series) Letters.
J.B.B.R.A.S. :	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
J.B.O.R.S. :	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
J.B.R.S. :	Journal of the Bihar Research Society.
J.L. :	Journal of the Department of Letters.
J.N.S.I. :	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.
J.R.A.I. :	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.
J.R.A.S. :	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
Legge :	Record of the Buddhistic kingdoms, being an account of the Chinese monk Fa-hien's Travels. Trans. by J.H. Legge. Oxford 1886.
Life :	The Life of Hiuen Tsang. Trans. S. Beal.
Lévi-Nepal :	Le Nepal, by Sylvain Lévi.

<u>Mem</u> :	Memoirs.
M.A.S.B. :	Memoirs of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal. Calcutta.
M.A.S.I. :	Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India. Calcutta & Delhi.
<u>Mah.</u> :	Mahābhārata.
M.D.S. :	Mānava Dharma Śāstra
M.K.P. :	Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.
M.M.K. :	Mañjuśrī - Mūlakalpa.
N. ch. :	Numismatic Chronicle.
Num. Suppl. :	Numismatic Supplement (in the J.R.A.S.B.)
P. :	Page.
Periplus:	* The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea.† Schoff.
PHAI	Political History of Ancient India. H.C. Raychaudhuri.
PIHC	Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.
Pl.	plate.
Proc. ASB	Proceedings of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal.
P.T.D.K.A.	The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age - F.E.Pargiter.
Ptolemy	McCrindle, J.W. Ancient India as described by Ptolemy. Ed. S.N. Majumdar.

P.T.S. :	Pāli Text Society.
Pt. :	Part.
Records :	Buddhist Records of the Western World. S. Beal.
RT :	Rājatarāṅgī of Kalhana. Stein, M.
RV :	R̥gveda.
S.B. :	Satapatha Brāhmaṇa
S.B.E. :	Sacred Books of the East Series. Oxford.
Takakusu :	Record of the Buddhistic Religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago, by I-tsing.
TK :	History of Kanauj. R.S. Tripathi.
Trans. :	Translation.
Vol. :	Volume.
Vi. P :	Viṣṇu Purāṇa.
V.D.S. :	Vāsīṣṭha Dharmasūtra.

- Watters : Yuan Chwang's Travels in India
Thomas Watters
- Win. Lit. : History of Sanskrit Literature,
M. Winternitz (English trans)
- Wonder. : The Wonder that was India. A.L. Basham.